

Information Series

CLAUDIA E. ANYASO

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Today is the 15th of September 2009 and this is an interview with Claudia, C-L-A-U-D-I-A, E. Anyaso, A-N-Y-A-S-O, and you go by Claudia?

ANYASO: I do.

Q: Claudia, what is the derivation of that name?

ANYASO: Well Anyaso is my husband's name and he is from Eastern Nigeria. It's not that common but it's an Ibo name.

Q: Do you know what it means?

ANYASO: Yes. It means "powerful person" or a person who has great influence in the community.

Q: I always ask because I'm told Kennedy in the original Gaelic means ugly head. So I can ask that one, I can almost always top whomever. Anyway, Claudia this is being done on behalf of the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Claudia let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

ANYASO: I was born in Northampton County, North Carolina and I was born October 30, 1944. North Hampton County is probably one of the poorest counties in North Carolina.

Q: Is that in the Piedmont or where?



ANYASO: It's not far from Richmond. It is about 94 miles south of Richmond and it's one of about four of what they call the Black counties, very, very heavy concentrations of African-Americans.

Q: It's sort of around the Dismal Swamp or something?

ANYASO: Yes, not too far from that.

Q: Oh, just go to the Dismal Swamp and turn left or something like that. Well let's talk a bit about your family. Let's talk on your father's side, what do you know about them?

ANYASO: Well we know quite a bit about them because my cousin Lisa Gladden as a high school student in Baltimore decided to find out about a relative who was a legislator during Reconstruction. Another cousin, Betty Barbara Bell Jones a history teacher in North Carolina researched her side of the family and came up with a Confederate General. So we had a couple of illustrious ancestors.

My father was a Rawls, R-A-W-L-E-S he spelled it but his ancestor spelled it R-A-W-L-S. He was a farmer, Ned Rawls. Edward Ned Rawls was a farmer, a teacher and he was a State legislator during Reconstruction. He married a woman who was a Ransom. We have been having a Bell Ransom family reunion I think for 31 years now. She was the daughter of a Confederate general and his slave Emma. So on one side we've got an African-American who was rather active during Reconstruction, and we have a Confederate general who was a U.S. Senator and a consul to Mexico. That sort of wraps it up on my father's side.

Q: Do you know it is sort of fascinating these connections, Black-White connections down in the South? Do you know the relationship between General Ransom and his daughter and all?

ANYASO: We've done some more research. In fact, the North Carolina historical society has been looking into this. Unfortunately, we don't have many personal facts about the relationship. There are no written records or oral history to point to. Much of the land where my relatives now live and farm belonged either to Ned Rawls or to the Ransoms so I think he bequeathed some land to her, his daughter's people and it's quite extensive. The Bell- Ransoms are still farming and have one of the only family owned cotton gins in the south. The Ransoms (the white side of the family) still grow peanuts or soy beans and are engaged in tree farming. There is a cemetery, but the old plantation house is gone. Historical markers indicate the civil war battles fought in the area and there is a marker for General Ransom.



Q: On your father's side what did his father do?

ANYASO: They became farmers.

Q: Farmers huh, how did he become a farmer? I mean did they come out of the slave heritage?

ANYASO: They had to come out of that. Though after being emancipated they owned their own land and were never sharecroppers.

Q: I would think so.

ANYASO: ...because Ned Rawls was born a slave and so then his children weren't, I don't think, slaves. But they always had a great deal of pride in owning their own property and being free. They weren't sharecroppers. Now on my mom's side we had sharecroppers and of course, they farmed too.

Q: Sharecroppers were people who didn't own the land but were sort of tenant farmers.

ANYASO: That's right.

Q: And they gave a portion or a share of what their crops to the owners...

ANYASO: Of the land.

Q: ...of the land. Often they were easily dispossessed and so this really set up an almost class system. This also was true for both Whites and Blacks down in the South. How did your mother and father meet?

ANYASO: They met in high school. It is the great leveler, the great community integrator. They met in Gumberry High School. Gumberry is one of the areas down there.

Q: Did your mother then become a farmer's wife? Was this...



ANYASO: They were high school classmates and sweethearts, got married; I have a brother who is about a year older than I am. But when I was six months old they joined that great Black migration to the North.

Q: Yes.

ANYASO: My father had a couple of sisters who were in Baltimore. They lived on the outskirts of Baltimore near Ann Arundel County where there was a shipyard. In fact, it was a dry dock, Maryland Dry Dock. They repaired ships there, and there was a great deal of activity because of the war and there were a lot of jobs. So that's where my parents went; they went to a little community called Fairfield, which was very near the dry dock. I was raised in Baltimore; I never lived in North Carolina.

Q: This is the interesting thing. You were born in 1944 and part of this the major stream from what we called the Deep South went up essentially to Detroit and Cleveland...

ANYASO: Chicago.

Q: Chicago and all.

ANYASO: I had aunts who lived there.

Q: This was the war industry and this was a huge migration during the '40s.

ANYASO: Well there are several older sisters, Aunt Alice and Aunt Ella who landed in Baltimore, but I also had an aunt Pecolia who went on to Chicago. Aunt Patricia (named after Ned Rawls' daughter) and Aunt Luvalia went to New York, and Uncle Ned (after the ancestor) went to New Jersey.

Q: So you sort of grew up in Fairfield, is that right?

ANYASO: I grew up in Fairfield.

Q: Okay let's talk about Fairfield. What was Fairfield like?



ANYASO: Well, it was a sleepy little town, very much segregated. You had a housing project for Blacks and then you had a housing project for Whites and then you had a little community where Fairfield was and people owned their own homes and had small businesses such as a cleaners, ice cream parlor, and beauty and barber shops. So we lived in Fairfield, first in a small two-room house on Brady Avenue. We were renters when my parents first went to Baltimore or Fairfield. Later they moved to Tate Street, and they were renting there also, but it was a larger house with a back yard. We had chickens and geese. The house and property belonged to Major and Lucy Jones who had quite a few homes rented out to migrants from the South. Major (aka Pop) also operated a grocery store. They educated their only daughter who became a teacher and married a Pullman porter. They belonged to the "upper class" in our small community. Finally, my father bought a house on Fairfield Road, the main street in the community, and that's where I grew up. We took in paying boarders in the early years and I slept on a couch in the living room. My parents lived in that house for about forty years when the City of Baltimore decided to buy up all the residential property.

Q: What was the big town? Was it Baltimore or Annapolis or what?

ANYASO: Baltimore City was the big town. On Saturdays we would go into Baltimore City; we were very close to South Baltimore. Baltimore had a series of markets. Everybody knows about the famous Lexington Market now. Well, they had a series of other markets and we patronized the Cross Street Market, which was in South Baltimore. When school integration came...maybe I should back up. From Fairfield we integrated schools in Brooklyn, Maryland, and so my brother went the first year when they integrated the schools and they had fights every day and it was pretty contentious. Then the second year my class, some of us, went to Benjamin Franklin Junior High School and we integrated that. That was pretty much what was going on in the United States at the time.

Q: For somebody that might not think of Maryland as being Deep South but at least as a teenager I grew up in Annapolis, Maryland, starting about 1939 and all. We were from the North, my grandpa was an officer with Sherman so you can see our cast...my mother used to come home horrified by what she saw. But the movie theatre, the Star Theatre, was Black only, the other three theatres were White only; there wasn't even a separate balcony or anything. It was just that way. The school system was obviously segregated; I can recall separate drinking fountains. I mean the whole bloody thing.

ANYASO: It was very much segregated.

Q: Although I'd have to say the neighborhoods there were Black and White neighborhoods right next to each other.



ANYASO: Exactly, that's what Fairfield was.

Q: As a little colonial town they'd never had time to really develop, to really separate things; but anyway. Let's talk first about the family. You say you have brothers a couple years older?

ANYASO: I had one brother, Ronald, about a year older.

Q: How close was your family?

ANYASO: Very close. Of those sisters that I spoke about, my dad (a half brother) was the youngest in the family and his two sisters lived there. We all lived about a block away from each other. They lived very near the school, PS (Public School) 154, which is the elementary school that we all attended. They could look out for us when we were all coming home from school or we would stay there after school and we would wait for my mom to get home from work. She was a seamstress and worked in the city. She worked for the Raleigh Clothiers or Manufacturers, they made men's suits and they still do I believe.

Q: Oh yeah, Raleigh, very much so. Your father was he working in the shipyard at the time?

ANYASO: No he didn't. He first went to work for, I think, Brookline Chemical. Now it's interesting that we had a little community there but it wasn't zoned residential. It was zoned industrial, so we had a couple chemical plants out there, with a horrible smell. He worked for Brookline Chemical and then he eventually went to Brooklyn where I went to junior high school. We integrated that school. He went to work for one of two companies located in Brooklyn that made furnace bricks for the steel mills. He worked for General Refractories and other men from Fairfield worked there and at the other company, Harbison-Walker. But anyway that's what he did he went to work there. My mom, before she went to work for Raleigh worked at a doctor's office in Brooklyn, Dr. Summers, so that was a close community adjacent to ours.

Q: Your mother and father met in high school, did they go on beyond high school or not?

ANYASO: They didn't. My dad finished high school in North Carolina. Though his sisters offered to send him to college, he didn't want to go. My mom hadn't finished. I think she was about a year or so away from finishing when they got married. The nice thing about it I always thought was that my mom finished when I was in college. She decided she wanted that high school diploma...



Q: Good for her.

ANYASO: ...she got a GED and didn't tell anybody. She just did this very quietly and I went home one weekend and she very proudly told me that she had her high school diploma.

Q: Good for her.

ANYASO: Yes. She was a highly intelligent woman and community oriented. She headed up the Brownie Troop when we were younger and was a Den mother for my brother's boy scout troop. She was always reading. I wish she had gone on because she really would have done something remarkable.

Q: She also belongs to a generation this includes Whites too that the people I'm interviewing today for the most part their parents were not college graduates. I'm sure in ten years now when I interview retired American diplomats to a person practically their parents would have been college graduates.

ANYASO: Probably.

Q: It was World War II that really changed the whole scene but that doesn't mean they weren't well educated because...

ANYASO: Right and believe in an education.

Q: Because education was sort of self-induced but reading was extremely popular and good books. I mean this was...

ANYASO: Good books. Before my parents moved to Baltimore, North Carolina had a very good public health system and they had public health nurses who went around to these little farming communities and taught the women health care. So my mom did a lot of reading and she worked with the nurse. My brother was fine, they had midwives as opposed to doctors. And when I came along, I was premature (1 and one half pounds). We were twins and the other twin, my sister Lucinda (two and one half pounds), died. Being premature, we needed an incubator. But as I said they had midwives, they didn't have hospitals so the nurse had taught her students how to make an incubator out of a shoebox.



Q: My God.

ANYASO: So that's what she did. When we were born premature she got her little shoebox and she made a little incubator for her babies. And she paid the midwife \$10. She was horrified at the cost of hospitals and doctors these days.

Q: When you were in Fairfield as a kid were you much of a reader at all?

ANYASO: Yes, I always was a bookworm. I read the early primers that kids had; Dick and Jane and Spot and all of that. My parents interestingly enough always had newspapers. The Baltimore Sun was our newspaper but there was also the Afro-American newspaper, which was very popular in Baltimore. We also subscribed to the Johnson Publishers publications, Jet magazine and Ebony magazine. We always had literature and reading material around the house

Q: Was Fairfield incorporated then or was it a real town or was it...?

ANYASO: As I said, it wasn't zoned residential so it really wasn't incorporated, not like some of the incorporated Black towns in the South. My mom and some of the neighbors started a Fairfield home improvement association and that kind of thing. We had a post office early on and they had a softball team. The community revolved around the various churches.

Q: Did you have a library?

ANYASO: We didn't have a library in Fairfield, but you'll recall that Brooklyn was next to Fairfield and they had the library. My first real trip outside of my own community was to get on a bus, because buses came out to Fairfield, and go to Brooklyn to the library and get my library card. So I did that. People don't really know Baltimore very much like they know New York and Chicago and Dallas, Texas. Baltimore had the Enoch Pratt Library, which was a free library system. They had a beautiful, beautiful main building in downtown Baltimore but then they had these little community libraries very much like the District has libraries around here; it was a very good one.

Q: We'll stick to books for a minute but during your early years what kind of books were you reading once you got past the primers and all what books did you find to enjoy?

ANYASO: I was always interested in adventure stories, Nancy Drew, all those juvenile...



Q: Nancy Drew seems to be a required reader for American female diplomats.

ANYSO: Well, yes. She was so daring and having adventures just like the boys (the Hardy Boys) so I read that series. But there was also another series I came across in the library. You know the automobile was just becoming popular and I can't remember who the author was but there was a woman who had written this series called The Automobile Girls. So I read about the automobile girls who had all kinds of adventures in their automobile getting out and cranking it up. I remember one of those stories had to do with Connecticut Avenue here in Washington. The automobile girls went up Connecticut Avenue in their car and things like that; so I read that. I was also always interested in other places. Maybe it was a little later on but I fell in love with Pearl Buck.

Q: Oh yes and learned about China.

ANYASO: I read about China and loved those stories. There was a film that came out based on one of her books called The Good Earth.

Q: Oh yes with Louise Rainer and Paul Muni.

ANYASO: Oh what a film, it was great.

Q: It was a wonderful scene, yes.

ANYASO: I think I must have seen that film about five times. There was Fairfield, an African-American community, and there was Brooklyn, a White community. On the other side of Brooklyn was Cherry Hill and Cherry Hill was another African-American community. They had more shops and services. They also had a movie theatre and every Saturday we would go to Cherry Hill on the bus and walk up the hill to the movie theater. They had a little shopping center, and they had doctors, and other professionals. Black professionals lived on Cherry Hill Road. My mother's younger sister, Aunt Inez Vanlandingham, lived in Cherry Hill and was married to a Black businessman. She also worked in the cafeteria at the Cherry Hill junior high school.

My music teacher lived right off of Cherry Hill Road. My mother insisted and maybe it's her southern heritage, I don't know, but every young woman had to know music, take piano lessons.

Q: Of course, I mean this is how you courted by playing.



ANYASO: So the school system had music teachers who came into the schools and gave us music appreciation and they also taught us how to play musical instruments. So we got my music teacher, Mrs. Bundy, who lived in Cherry Hill, to give me private lessons.

Q: Was this piano?

ANYASO: Piano and she was married to a lawyer, one of those professionals who lived in Cherry Hill. So that was fun although I wasn't a great student, I hated to practice, I was much more of a tomboy, I would rather play with marbles.

Q: While you were growing up let's say up through early schooling in that period did you feel very much...I mean was life very much separate White, Black? I mean you were in a Black community and this was what it was?

ANYASO: You know you never thought about that kind of thing. It's only now after this Civil Rights movement that we really think in those terms. I mean you lived in your community, period.

Q: Yes.

ANYASO: We had our church. They had Black cemeteries and White cemeteries but you always lived in your community and you grew up in your community and those were the people you knew. Now once integration started, for example, I went to Brooklyn, we integrated their junior high school and then I realized that there were these other people. Although there was a White housing project in Fairfield, there was no real interaction between the two neighborhoods. We knew they were there, and there was a Schwartz family that lived on the boundary, they were a White family, but we didn't mingle at all. They had their own elementary school, Victory School No. 238. It was only with the Civil Rights Movement that we started moving out and getting to know other people. My mom joined the PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) in Brooklyn, the Benjamin Franklin PTA. The president of that was a Mrs. Fairing and her husband was the bank president. They were White but they were committed to seeing integration work so the PTA was very instrumental in helping to make sure that integration worked. My mother was there and Mrs. Dorothy Leeper from Fairfield, those were the two mothers who really worked in this integrated PTA. The principal of the high school was Miss Gladys Mitchell. You know teachers didn't necessarily get married in those days.

Q: No, of course not.



ANYASO: So Miss Mitchell wanted to make sure integration worked, too. One of the things I had written down to mention was graduation because it sort of caught up with me later in my life. My Cousin Eula Blackman was one of the first teachers to integrate Benjamin Franklin. She taught me English. There were several other Black teachers at the school, Mr. Everett who taught Science and Monsieur Couze who taught French. I flourished and enjoyed myself there; it was different for girls. I never had any confrontations or any fights like my brother with the White kids who would wait outside of the school. So I did fine and when I graduated I had the highest average in my graduating class; so I was the valedictorian and eligible for a special award. The American Legion gave the award every year but they weren't as progressive as they are now. They refused to give me the award because I was a Black student and they gave it to the next highest student. I always remembered that.

Q: Of course.

ANYASO: Ms. Mitchell said, "No, I can't have this in my school because this thing has to work." So she got a special award and I still have the little silver bracelet that I got upon graduation. So let's fast forward to a couple years ago when I'm working at the State Department as Director of Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy in the Africa Bureau. We got a request from the American Legion to speak at their annual meeting which was in Salt Lake City, Utah. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was invited out, too. They gave her their award for the Woman of the Year and I went out to talk to them about Africa policy. When I was making small talk with the organizers I said, "You know, when I was a kid and I should have gotten that award and didn't." They said, "Yeah, well we've come a long way", and they started telling me about all the things that they were doing for students regardless of color. So that made me feel good, that was a good thing.

Q: Also to put it in context the American Legion wasn't just anti-Black it was a very anti almost anything that smacked as socialism or anything else, very conservative up through well I think the '60s...

ANYASO: This was in the '50s and '60s.

Q: ...or so when things really started to change. So it was a little bit anti-alloof.

ANYASO: It was that.

Q: Well then how important was religion in your family? What religion were you and then...?



ANYASO: I was Baptist and I think many African-Americans from the South tended to be Baptist. In fact, I think my ancestor Ned Rawls helped to found the community church, Roanoke Chapel (informally called Mud Chapel because of the piles of mud when it rained), in North Carolina and so our family had always been churchgoers. I have a relative who still plays the piano in that church; she's done that for seventy years now. When we got to Baltimore there was the First Baptist Church of Fairfield and my father became the church clerk. For as long as I can remember he was always the church clerk; we had Sunday school, the church sponsored a kindergarten. I went through the kindergarten and on Sundays we would go to church and have our own little children's corner. I'll never forget my father...I was always a shy kid I liked to read and I liked to do brainy things, intellectual things, but my father was always pushing me to be more active and to do things. So I remember I was outside playing marbles with some of my friends one March and my father had gone to the church, there was a funeral down at the church. Well he had already pushed me into playing the piano for the Sunday school. I also taught the beginning classes in the Sunday school. They couldn't find anybody to play for the choir at this funeral. I was in my jeans, dungarees we called them in those days, playing marbles and I was rather filthy. So he grabbed me and washed me up, put me in a dress and took me down to the church because I was going to play for this funeral. I have never liked funerals. I mean I was really afraid of dead people but I did it. I didn't look at the coffin, I mentally removed myself from that whole thing but whatever they wanted me to play I played.

After that, I graduated from Sunday school to playing for the senior choir. My dad was the church clerk, my mom had taught Sunday school but she was also on the usher board and the deaconess board. So a lot of our life revolved around that church. My brother managed to miss church at every opportunity.

Q: One of the things that I see not far from here there is a Black church here on Sunday where all the ladies have the most beautiful hats and all and get dressed up with white gloves...

ANYASO: Amazing that they still do that. That's what we did.

Q: I must say other churches are pretty badly dressed.

ANYSO: My mother wore hats, my sister wears hats; I wear hats. In fact, after I joined the Foreign Service I had this whole thing in my head that in order to show respect for the culture I was living in and serving my country I should respect these people. I wasn't going to be in a dashiki or be very informal; I was going to be very dressed up so I always wore hats. So Nigerians always called me the lady with the hat. Nigerian women I find love hats.

Q: They've got this wonderful turbans and...



ANYASO: They have turbans or head ties but they have these marvelous millinery hats.

Q: Really?

ANYASO: Yes, mostly imported from Britain, and so I was right at home. I remember when I was first assigned in the Foreign Service I went to Nigeria but I think this must have been much later when I was with John Campbell and he was presenting his credentials to the Nigerian government; this was in Abuja the new capital. He said, "Okay, I want you and the AID (US Agency for International Development) director to come with me when I present my credentials." So, of course, I got my hat and my gloves and went to the ceremony, which was in the presidential villa with President Obasanjo. I still have the picture of me shaking Obasanjo's hand with Ambassador John Campbell beside me.

Q: He was the ambassador.

ANYASO: He was the ambassador to Nigeria. It was wonderful and I had my hat to mark the occasion.

Q: While we are at it what about the music of the church with the choir and all the wonderful spirituals and gospel music?

ANYASO: Spirituals, gospel music. Everybody associates the Baptist church I think, more than others with gospel music. Interestingly enough the music directors and others at the church always liked the anthems too. They liked classical music and, in fact, when I was in high school I went to the Peabody Conservatory, which is in Baltimore.

Q: Yes, it is one of the pre-eminent musical schools in the United States.

ANYASO: I just loved being there. I wasn't a great student; I got through my courses and took my piano lessons still. But classical music was something that we loved. Now I played at playing, my sister Shelly (born 14 years after me) also went to Peabody and she had the voice and went to Morgan State, which was a family school, Morgan State University. But classical music was what she sang best. She would sing gospel music but her voice really was trained for classical music. I think she joined the Baltimore Community Choir at one point. To hear my sister sing Ave Maria is to die and go to heaven, I mean it was extraordinary. It was great. But music was a part of our lives; the church was a part of our lives.



Q: Tell me on this growing up particularly in the early years how did your family or did they treat sort of the Black-White business sort of watch out for the Whites or know your place or push ahead. In other words how would you describe this?

ANYASO: Well, you have to understand that generation.

Q: Yes, absolutely.

ANYASO: Coming from the South and Baltimore was a segregated city so yes you did know your place. Now I would get on that bus, but I don't remember having to sit at the back of the bus when I went to get my library card but everything else the lunch counters and the department stores you couldn't...they had the water fountains for each race.

Blacks could buy clothes but they couldn't try them on to see how they fit. So we knew our place but you see we started integrating the schools. We integrated the junior high school and then we also integrated the high school. Baltimore had this wonderful system of high schools, they were segregated but for the White students had Mergenthaler, which was for people who went into the trades; this was high school. You could take nursing and other things like that. They had liberal arts high schools, Western High School, Eastern High School; I went to Western High School. They had City College and then they had a Polytechnic for the kids who wanted to concentrate on science and technology. All boys, all girls, two boy's high schools and two girl's high schools and this was great. We integrated those schools...

Q: You might explain when you say we integrated them. I'm not sure the term means much to...

ANYASO: Being African-Americans? Well, they always carefully selected students to be the vanguard to do the integrating. They didn't just send anybody off for this "wonderful" experience, you had to be a little tough and you had to have very good grades. So to junior high school I went, my best friend Bobby Clark went, two of my cousins went, we four went to integrate the junior high school. Now from the junior high school we had more choice in schools. I was interested in going to college so I went to Western high school, which was the liberal arts girls' school down on Howard Street not far from the Lexington Market. There were other kids from around the city who came from their junior high schools into high school and so we had a very good group. Andrea Hill lived on Madison Avenue, her grandfather, I think, was in railroads those sleeping car porters and people like that.

Q: This is sort of the elite of the Black...



ANYASO: Of the Black community.

Q: ...the Black Community.

ANYASO: Absolutely.

Q: The Pullman car porters...

ANYSO: The Pullman car porters, A. Phillip Randolph and his porters; so Andrea came from Madison Avenue. Her best friend Sheila Biddle lived close to Madison Avenue on Freemont Avenue and they all came to Western High School. There were kids from what we called the boonies or the country, more rural parts of the area, Glen Bernie, which was not the Glen Bernie of today. We had a good friend because we all kept together and we went to college together. Then my two cousins, one of my cousins went to Western and one went to Eastern, which was the other girls' school. So you had this group of students who were involved in integration. Now when I got to Morgan, of course, Morgan was an African-American College at the time. I had had two cousins who had graduated from Morgan and then we, our set of cousins, were going through Morgan. I had two cousins, my friends from Western High School...at this point we were thinking we integrated junior high school and we integrated high school but we really want a Black experience; now enough of this.

Q: When you are a representative it is never much fun.

ANYASO: It's not fun at all.

Q: No, in a way diplomats are in that position, it's work.

ANYASO: It's work.

Q: Well let's talk before we get to junior high and elementary school how did you find elementary school? Any particular teachers, the subjects you liked? Subjects you didn't like that sort of thing?

ANYASO: I always liked social studies, I always like history but I also liked music. Let me see, I think we had a Mrs. Redwine who was the vice principal. Now I'm talking about a four-room schoolhouse so we were all packed into this one small wooden building.



Q: So you had two or three grades in the same room?

ANYASO: Two classes in the same room.

Q: Yeah.

ANYASO: You could learn.

Q: I've done that.

ANYASO: You could learn at your grade, above your grade and all of that. For me it was always a choice between English and History, I liked those two subjects best.

Q: Were you a good speller?

ANYASO: Oh absolutely I was a great speller.

Q: You were the kind of person I hated. Thank God for spell check and the computer because...but I was a guy and guys don't learn spelling; girls take care of that.

ANYASO: Girls do but we had fun. We had May Day programs, we'd have a May pole and the whole community would get involved. They would have hot dogs and cotton candy and popcorn so that was great. Ms. Redwine in addition to teaching us the various subjects also liked Square dancing. I don't know why or how but she'd get these migraine headaches and be in such pain that she couldn't teach. So instead she would just put on this square dancing music and we'd square dance the whole afternoon. You know The Turkey in the Straw and do-si-do your partner; so fine and I appreciated that; then she'd show films. Before Superman there was Captain Marvel or Captain somebody.

Q: Captain Marvel yeah.

ANYASO: They had films, these serials and they would stop at this exciting part and then you would have to pick it up the next...

Q: The next time, yeah.



ANYASO: ...time and they would show these films to us once a week or so we would have movies and that kind of thing.

Q: Well did you feel in the Maryland system, let's take the pre-integrated time, that students in some parts the Black students were really deprived because they didn't get much in the way of quality education. Did you feel that you were getting a pretty good education looking back on it?

ANYASO: Looking back I can't fault my education. True, I did a lot of square dancing but I got educated at that level. We had excellent teachers and an excellent principal, Mr. Seaborne. Benjamin Franklin Junior High School just opened my eyes to all kinds of other interests, science, and sports. They had a much better sports program. At P.S. 154 we didn't have much of a recreation program. We played dodge ball and jump rope and things like that as we were kids. But once I went to Ben Franklin they really had gym and you learned different sports such as volleyball as well as basketball and all of the different things that we learned and the textbooks. We were in an integrated situation so they were good textbooks. Western High School was a rather elitist high school; we all knew that. To go to Western High School was a big deal. I knew that the best students academically went to Western.

Q: I dated a girl who graduated from Western High who became a debutante. This was back in 1950.

ANYASO: Is this true?

Q: Yes.

ANYASO: Yes, they had a school song and you could learn the history of Western High School from this song. It started with sixteen young ladies and they had pictures of them on the wall. They had white dresses and they had these bouquets of roses; it was almost like a finishing school I guess but it became much more than that later on. When I had my own children, I have four children, two girls and two boys, I wanted my girls to have that kind of experience because I felt that going to an all girls school helped me in terms of my leadership skills and training.

Q: There's a real plus to this I mean...

ANYASO: There is a real plus, your student government leadership...



Q: Because there is maybe genetically things will change but they found that integrated by male and female schools women have more of a tendency to hold back.

ANYASO: Exactly.

Q: They don't quite flower as much as those who go to all one-sex schools.

ANYASO: That's it. Now at Western we had probably the best choir in the State. I was a member of the choir and a member of the special group in the choir, the Treblets; we had a fabulous woman who was our music teacher Mrs. Irene Lauder. Irene was the ugliest woman I'd ever seen but a great conductor and she acted as though she were Leonard Bernstein. She conducted with passion and style.

Q: You are making very firm gestures as of a conductor.

ANYASO: When Irene conducted it was as though she were conducting a symphony orchestra. She took us to the annual state wide choir competition but there were churches in the city and this was something she exposed us to as girls, a Methodist church it was an all-white church but her choir sang there. We sang all kinds of music. We did songs from West Side Story, Sound of Music, we always won at the State competitions. So that was very good training. Now as far as my girls are concerned when I was in the Foreign Service and I didn't have Western High School to send them to, I sent them to Madeira over in McLean, Virginia. It was the same kind of situation, they got, I thought the leadership training and by golly they had those white dresses and those roses.

Q: I also dated a girl, Leilani Eddy; she was from a Navy family from Madeira.

ANYASO: You got around Stuart.

Q: Oh yeah.

ANYASO: A good school and my daughter Patricia is currently an assistant dean over there, my younger daughter. But education once we started on this integrated thing we didn't feel...you could do and go as far as you wanted to go.



Q: Well let's talk about junior high; this is where you first did this. Were you prepped for this, how did you feel? Were you in the first group to go in?

ANYASO: I was in the second group.

Q: The second group.

ANYASO: My brother and his friends fought their way through.

Q: Guys, did they fight?

ANYSO: Well you see Brooklyn was a working class neighborhood and so you had these guys who were working at the brick refractories and some who were not working at all. They had the leather jackets and they had the chains. They would hang around the school because they didn't want those Black kids going to "their" school. So my brother and his friends fought their way in everyday and fought their way out everyday; so it wasn't pleasant. We knew we were African-Americans, the junior high school had an elementary school attached to it; don't ask me how this works. So some of the children the good students in the junior high would be selected to go and take the little kids to lunch; I was a proctor so I went over to take my group to lunch. There was this little tow-haired, freckled faced kid and he kept staring at me and I thought, "What's his problem?" He wasn't being mean or anything he just didn't know why I looked like I looked and why I wasn't the same color that he was. These were little kids and so he finally came over to me and he just rubbed my hand to see if it came off. So I had to explain to him that people had different complexions and that it didn't come off; they were fine. There was that and in the classrooms there were a lot of kids who didn't want us there and who would try to ignore us in the classes but if you knew the answer you knew the answer and you would just raise your hand and you gave the answer and you participated. Or if you took French class you answered whatever it was so they had to accept us if you participated and we did.

A lot of people who lived in Brooklyn moved farther out into the county down, oh God, what is that Severna, Maryland? I forget where that was but they wanted to get away from integration and so there was some of that and we knew that.

Q: Was there a selection process of who's going to go to junior high? Were you picked because you were a good student?

ANYASO: Yes there was a process of selection.



Q: How did this work?

ANYASO: Well it was the principal and the faculty who had had us for these four-rooms of classes and they decided which kids would go. Now I never understood how my brother went because my brother was all boy and he wasn't a great student, he was very athletic but he wasn't a good student. But they selected him and he went and he fought every day.

Q: It was probably a good idea. Did your mother and father or others sort of say okay well you are going to be a credit to your race and try to do this or mind your p's and q's or were you sort of prepped before you went?

ANYASO: I don't know about the other students. When you're a kid you don't know all the things that are going on around you so we just knew that we were going to leave our school and go to this school in Brooklyn and there were White kids there. My parents were, as I said, my mother was a Den mother and the scouting and all the other things that middle-class parents, we weren't middle-class but they did these things. They were more concerned about how I felt and that I wouldn't be too nervous, or upset or anxious. They didn't want it to be a horrible experience for me I guess in other words they were more protective than explaining to me that I had to be a credit to my race. I guess intuitively you know if you are chosen for this kind of thing you are special and all of that but I've always had good manners. Even among my own friends and relatives I was always the smart one, the neat one, those kinds of things so they just wanted me to be myself and not be too nervous about it.

Q: Had there been in your area big confrontations prior to integration that you had at Central High, Little Rock and other places? Or had this just happened?

ANYASO: There wasn't anything like that. I didn't know anything about that in terms of Baltimore. I think those teachers in that system said this is going to work and the PTA said that it's going to work. Our parents said we are going to participate and we are going to make sure it works and there were other White parents who said we are going to make this work. So both at the junior high school and at Western High School you had people who were committed to making this work. For example, I joined the drama club when I was at Western and the choir too but the drama club I really loved. The Siegwalds, this particular family I think he was a big doctor at Johns Hopkins Hospital. The mother was involved in a local theater group. These were liberals and good people and so they were very active in making sure this worked.



Now you are going to have problems. I remember the student council at Western I ran for president of that and I think I lost by something like one vote. There are always going to be cliques, sometimes they are racial cliques and so we had that at Western and we felt that there was discrimination but we always felt that we could talk to people about it. We had another strong principal, Nannette Blackiston; this woman was like a battleship. I mean she moved through the halls like the flow or swell of water was behind her. She didn't care what your color was if you were a Western girl you behaved a certain way and we were always on our p's and q's the way we dressed, the way we spoke. Even for our assemblies they would invite very important people in to talk to us and she said, "I don't care if you are bored you will not slouch, you will sit up, you will put an interested look on your face. You can sleep if you want but you will put an interested look on your face and you will look attentive," and we knew this or else she would be there. So we had great teachers.

My English teacher, I always gravitated toward English and history. My English teacher had gone to Goucher College and that is still a wonderful liberal arts college, a private college in Baltimore. If I had it to do over I probably would have gone to Goucher instead of Morgan but I wanted my Black experience so I went to Morgan. But they knew their subjects and they taught well. We had a German woman, maybe she was Belgian, who taught us French, and so we had good professors. Michael Franco was also one of my teachers. My history teachers weren't as good as my English teachers but that's okay. But everybody thinks that there is one Black experience, there isn't, there are so many Black experiences. So I think we had the sort of Black experience light in Baltimore, we didn't have the big upheavals like you had in other parts of the country.

When I went to Morgan State I was involved in student government and I didn't want to get involved in those Greek organizations but the summer after my freshman year I didn't know what civil rights was; I really didn't. I knew something was happening but I didn't know about the whole thing. The president of the student government, Curt Smothers, called me at home, we were on summer break, and he said, "Look, I have this invitation the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee is having a meeting in Atlanta and they want us to send a representative from our campus." Now nobody would be stupid enough to go but me and I went. There were these kids from all over the country, Marion Barry, Julian Bond, John Lewis, these are some of the names people know now. Who else was there?

Q: Carmichael?



ANYASO: I was an activist at Morgan my first year and we started something called Dissent and we were always dissenting. We didn't want the military on campus, there were a lot of things we didn't want and we didn't want all this segregation anymore. We started demonstrating about a shopping center near us, Northwood Shopping Center, which was totally segregated and we had nowhere to go. We were on campus and had no movie theaters, no restaurants, and no barbershops and so we said we can't accept this so we started with our placards and we started marching. Now this is not elementary or junior high this is university; so that was a big deal. They finally decided we had to stop this marching so the police came and carted us off to the lock up which is not a real jail and they figured that would teach us a lesson and we would go back to classes and forget about this; we didn't. So we went back and we kept marching so the police came again and took us away. They said well the lock up didn't work; we are going to send you to jail. So they sent us to Pine Street. I don't know if you know Baltimore but that has to be one of the worst jails in the country and the world. They had all kinds of rodents and it was just a grimy, damp, awful place and they had all kinds of awful people in there. Our parents were outraged, how could their little daughters and their sons be put in with all these criminals. So they were furious and they went to the mayor; luckily we had Mayor Goodman, we had a Jewish- American mayor and they were putting all kinds of pressure on him to get those kids out of there. So we got out and the dean of women, Dean Thelma Bando, came in her furs and her makeup and her jewelry and she cried. So we went back to Morgan, and we went back to Northwood, and we marched some more. They said, "Look the lock up didn't work and the jail didn't work you are going to prison" and they sent us to prison.

Q: Good God.

ANYASO: That's what we thought, oh my God what is going on. All of the kids who were in the Greek organizations, the sororities and the fraternities, they were behind us too. They were horrified and couldn't understand this. I said, "Well you might as well relax and go with the flow." But the prison was not comfortable so here are these parents who are outraged again and they come marching to the prison and talk to the warden and they have to get their kids out. I remember my dad. Now his generation would never have done anything like that. They were sending their daughter, the first generation to go to college, to college to get an education. They didn't bargain for this other stuff. I remember my dad came down and he talked to me, he was always a great dad, and he said to me, "Do you really want to do this?" I said, "We have to do this, we really have to do this. If we don't do it now it may never be done."

Q: This was a shopping center which...



ANYASO: The whole city was segregated and this segregated shopping center happened to be close to our campus, it was about two blocks away. Actually what we did by integrating that shopping center was to integrate the whole city. I remember when we finally did it one of my professors, my history professor, August Meier, Auggie found me on campus and said, "We are going to celebrate." So I said, "What are you talking about we are going to celebrate?" He said, "I'm going to take you downtown" and we went down to Mt. Vernon Place, which is where Peabody is, and Charles Street where the banks and the brokerage firms are; this is the heart of Baltimore's business district, our Wall Street. We integrated, I think, one of their little cafeterias, restaurants or so because it was now open, they had to serve us and we had this marvelous Black waiter who had never served Blacks in this restaurant and he was a bit timid. He didn't quite know what to do. He was in his little white jacket and he served me and Auggie. I think I had a Brandy Alexander and it was an interesting time and it led to other things.

There was a civic action group in Baltimore. In addition to the NAACP and the big organizations, we had a local civil rights organization. I got involved with them and we wanted to...sometimes labor conditions are close to slavery. There were these laundries that were going to Virginia and other places in the South and getting these women to work in the laundries. They told them about these wonderful jobs they were going to get in the city and the pay they were going to get. They kept them in these houses all together and they gave them almost nothing in terms of wages. If you've ever worked in a real laundry it's hot, the washing and ironing and everything and we were trying to unionize these laundry workers. We had an in because we had already integrated the restaurants and the public accommodations but there were these laundry workers who weren't being treated well. So they listened to us and we were able to organize some of them to get better conditions because people had no idea how these people were being treated and how they were living and so that was bad.

Q: Actually the same thing is going on today with...

ANYASO: Emigrants.

Q: ...emigrants, Orientals or Hispanics and all often run by Orientals or Hispanics.

ANYASO: Exactly.

Q: But in cities where they are kept and their passports and they are often illegal so that's a hold over...

ANYASO: So they can't come out.



Q: ...and they can't come out. Of course it's being done in the trafficking of women too.

ANYASO: It's a bad side to capitalism.

Q: Looking at the time I've got to quit...

ANYASO: I haven't even gotten to the Foreign Service.

Q: Oh I'm not going to leave this. I would like to talk more about Morgan State and both the classes and your interest in foreign affairs and how you were feeling about some of these movements that were going on like the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee but also these were movements but they were also political types and where did you stand on these.

ANYASO: You know once you become an activist you're an activist. So it was SNCC for civil rights, the march on Washington, which I will tell you about, I didn't go. I went home after being in the South for a whole summer. But there was a Students for A Democratic Society (SDS) and we worked with them also against the war in Vietnam.

Q: As usual all these movements have their divisions and all around personalities and all.

ANYASO: Exactly.

Q: And your time in the South. Because this is important stuff and I don't want to leave this. Okay?

ANYASO: Okay.

Q: Okay today is the 21st of September 2009 with Claudia Anyaso. Claudia...

ANYASO: Yes.

Q: We are in Baltimore and you are a student at Morgan State was it?

ANYASO: That's correct.



Q: And you were there from when to when?

ANYASO: I was at Morgan State from 1962-1966 when I graduated cum laude.

Q: There was a little bit of scurrying in the African-American community in those days wasn't there?

ANYASO: There was quite a bit. As I mentioned to you the students at Morgan were in a very a very interesting section of the city and there was very little around there except this shopping center called Northwood which was closed to students. They couldn't go to the movie theater, couldn't go to the restaurant, and couldn't get your haircut, the usual.

Q: When you are saying this you mean the African-Americans.

ANYASO: The African-Americans could not... the public accommodations were segregated.

Q: And so?

ANYASO: So we decided that it was untenable and that students should be able to have access to these facilities so we started demonstrating with placards, we got arrested, we got locked up and then we got arrested and then we went to the Baltimore city jail. Then we got arrested and we got sent to the Baltimore penitentiary. Elevating.

Q: Who was the mayor during this time? It wasn't D'Alesandro?

ANYASO: No, no Tommy D'Alesandro, Nancy Pelosi's dad, had long since left the scene. Now his son Tommy Jr., her brother, I think had come on later. But the person at the time was a Jewish-American mayor. I forget his first name but his last name was Goodman. He came under a great deal of pressure because as you said before a lot of us in those days were first generation college students and our parents had sent us to college to study and to become educated and to get good jobs and to be successful. They didn't send us to college to demonstrate. So when their kids started demonstrating and getting arrested they were horrified. I mean you don't go to college to get arrested. So they were very upset, the African-American parents were very upset, city leaders didn't like the image this was presenting so there was a lot of pressure on him to do something about it. Finally, public facilities in Baltimore were desegregated because of our efforts; at least I like to think that's what happened.



Q: Also, his coming from the Jewish community I recall a series of movies about Baltimore, what's the man's name? This is one of those diners and a couple of other ones where there were country clubs that would not accept Jews.

ANYASO: Oh absolutely.

Q: So there was very definitely the whole city was split into various segments.

ANYASO: We had our various ethnic groups and certainly I think the Jewish community was very sympathetic because of their own experiences.

Q: Well tell me did you have a problem? All right Morgan State students, I mean you are bright, on your way up and all and I mean you are sure of yourself. But you have what amounts to a real lower class in Baltimore of African-Americans.

ANYASO: And Whites, we had West Virginia Whites.

Q: And Whites absolutely because all of these things in Boston when I went through this with the Irish and all. Was there a concern on your part that the untamed African-Americans might screw up the works because you were obviously a controlled group and if you opened it up this could scare the be Jesus out of the Whites or something. Was this a problem?

ANYASO: You know Baltimore is a funny place. Certainly there were racial tensions but everybody knew their place, they had their neighborhood. Where I was I lived in Fairfield, there was Cherry Hill these were Black communities. In South Baltimore you had a lot of Poles and Germans and in East Baltimore a lot of Italians and Greeks and others.

Q: You had the Italian group around the canneries.

ANYASO: You had the Italians, then you had the Jewish-Americans up Liberty Road in West Baltimore; so we all had our neighborhoods. As I said, I went to Western High School and our school song was called Cavalcade of Western. You could tell when the neighborhood was changing because Western would move. When I was there it was down on Howard Street, the neighborhood wasn't terribly good but it was in the city. Now they've moved out to Jones Falls, a better neighborhood, more upper class for their daughters.



Q: Well in this what sort of role were you taking when you say we? Were you out there waving a banner?

ANYASO: I definitely was waving a banner. I told you the girls who went to Western felt that they were leaders. So after I graduated from Western in 1962 and went to Morgan. I joined organizations including the student government; I was a student senator at Morgan. We also had a little group that was more activist oriented called Dissent. Cliff Duran who was a professor of philosophy, you know how those philosophy professors are, from Wisconsin where they have a lot of Socialists. So Cliff was our supervisor, our counselor, for this group called Dissent.

Q: Was he White?

ANYASO: Yes he was.

Q: But of the Wisconsin Socialist Hubert Humphrey brand or even more?

ANYASO: Oh you know he went to Cuba later and chopped sugarcane. He was very much involved in activities and so he was our advisor. He was a very quiet, very gentle person who is now living in West Virginia, Berkley Springs; he has a guesthouse, bed and breakfast there. But he was a very mild mannered person but very decisive in terms of right and wrong and the ills in society. He helped us to understand things; segregation was not a good thing and so many of us who were involved in Dissent joined in these protests. Of course, you had your fraternities and sororities on campus and they were all organized too and they also got involved.

Q: I'm getting my information more from Spike Lee movies or something but the Black fraternities were a bit self-absorbed or...

ANYASO: Yes I would say so. They were not in the forefront but we dragged them along. They thought it would be something to do, many of them, of course, dominated the student government and so they thought it was a good thing to do as long as it didn't get too messy and didn't interfere with their...

Q: Social activities.



ANYASO: ...parties and they had pledge week and all of that, they didn't want anything to interrupt that. I recall when we got ourselves to the penitentiary some of them had still hung in there and gone along with us but they were the first out. When their parents came and said, "Do you want to leave?" they said, "Yes." So they were the first ones to leave. Some of us said, "Uh, uh we are not leaving because if we leave we give it up."

Q: How did this penitentiary business work? In the first place how the hell could they send you to the penitentiary when you haven't been sentenced?

ANYASO: I don't know.

Q: My legal knowledge is pretty dim but a penitentiary...

ANYASO: There were courts. We had to be arraigned when we were at the lock up near our campus. I can't remember too many other courts or legal processes, then we went to the jail and we were released eventually and then we went to the penitentiary. I guess we were disturbing the peace and we were breaking laws. This is civil disobedience after all.

Q: What happened to you in the penitentiary and how long were you there

ANYASO: Oh, at least two weeks. They didn't really segregate us; they put us in with the criminals.

Q: Yes.



ANYASO: Yes is right. That wasn't very pleasant. People who had been in for a while have lost their energy and they were like zombies and the food was absolutely horrendous, it was worse than campus food. The soup was just awful and these tiny little cages they put you in. So for some reason I never smoked or anything but I got these matchboxes and paper and I was decorating my cell making little items. It wasn't origami but it was something arty just to relieve the tension. There was nothing to do. You see these films about prison and they are going out to the yard to exercise, no there was no activity like that we were just marched from the cell to the dining hall. You had to eat. We didn't have any chores. That was the good thing. We didn't have the laundry or the kitchen duty or any of those things to do. We were just there waiting for something to happen. The longer we stayed there, the more pressure was put on the mayor to do something about getting us out because our parents, the administrators at Morgan, the Afro-American newspaper which was a big influence in Baltimore and in the African-American community, the Black churches, everybody was upset that this could happen to college students so they were applying pressure and it was in the media. I never really looked to see what was in The Baltimore Sun paper but I can imagine they did some stories too.

Q: You were just released unconditionally?

ANYASO: Sure. Finally they said you can leave and so we went back to campus, had a big party, celebrated and as I said I had a history professor by the name of August Meier who was quite good and he's never gotten the credit he deserved; he was a Jewish-American professor who'd written some great books on African-American issues in history. But anyway Auggie found me when I got out and we went downtown to Mt. Vernon Place which is downtown Baltimore near the Washington Monument near Peabody.

Q: That's the center of Baltimore.

ANYASO: It's the center of Baltimore, it's a very cultured area, it's just up from Charles Street where we have a lot of the banking and financial and legal offices. So from there we were campus heroes. I don't think we fully understood what we had done because civil rights wasn't as well known then as it is now but we knew we had done something good and that our parents and ourselves wouldn't have to go through all of the indignities that we'd had to. You'd go to a department store you couldn't eat, you couldn't try on clothes it was just...

Q: There was also another difference that this wasn't the Deep South where you have these guys with the white outfits burning crosses and shotguns; I mean these are scary people.



ANYASO: Yes they are scary people and Baltimore was a border state. We didn't have the problems like that. We didn't have the Klan. I don't ever remember being called a Nigger, the N word but when I was in North Carolina, which is where my parents are from that's the first time I'd heard it. Certainly that summer after my freshman year and after we had been involved in these demonstrations I did go down to a meeting of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating committee, SNCC, and then I really understood the enormity of the social change that was taking place.

Q: I want to talk about your impression of these groups like SNCC and what was the other one?

ANYASO: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference with Martin Luther King, there's also the NAACP, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People with Roy Wilkins, the Urban League with Whitney Young, and the Congress on Racial Equality with James Farmer..

Q: In the first place on a fashion note did you have an Afro? I mean was this sort of a sign...

ANYASO: At that time no.

Q: This is where your hair sticks out. I always thought it as rather attractive.

ANYASO: I did too, I did too.

Q: I'm surprised I don't see it more often.

ANYASO: I had one later but not during this period. I was just getting accustomed to everything that was going on. Around this time, there was Angela Davis out in California who became notorious and who has an amazing Afro hairdo. She was quite attractive and it was her signature look.

Q: You had to go home too.

ANYASO: I had to go home. I did start wearing dungarees with the bibs. The Peace Corps people are noted for wearing dashikis. We were noted for wearing our jeans with the bibs that were worn by Black farmers in the South.



Q: Did you have any feel about the U.S. government behind you because this was when Lyndon Johnson was president and Bobby Kennedy was attorney general? Did you have any feel that behind all of this that you were on sort of a winning course that you weren't going to be faced with the National Guard pushing you out or doing things or not? Did you have any feel for that?

ANYASO: The government wasn't your friend necessarily. The face of the U.S. government that we confronted was the FBI and J. Edgar Hoover. Now Hoover felt that Martin Luther King and all these people, the rabble-rousers, King was a Communist, he knew that and he did everything he could to make that a true reality. When we were in the South the local media played into that and so the stories were about outside agitators and things like this. I went to this meeting in Atlanta and stayed in the South for the whole summer. I became...

Q: This is the summer of what?

ANYASO: The summer of let's see I graduated in '62 so it must have been the summer of '63 because in August there was the march on Washington. So it was the summer of '63 I became a field secretary for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and I made about \$18.26 a month.

Q: What does being a field secretary mean?

ANYASO: That meant that you helped to organize voter registration and mass meetings that you were being conducted in the various communities.

Q: Where were you working?

ANYASO: I was assigned to Gadsden, Alabama, which is not very far from Birmingham, Alabama. The Congress on Racial Equality had started the Freedom Rides and Anniston and Birmingham were places where these buses were going and these busses were burned. So we knew it wasn't risk free what we were doing but we felt that people had a right to vote, people should be citizens of their country, etc., etc.; I was involved with voter registration. We would have classes and we would educate people on their rights and on U.S. history so that they could pass a voting/literacy test. Very often in the South you had to pass these exams so that you could vote and we wanted these people to pass their exams so we were tutoring them on that.

Q: Did you find when you got down South down there you came out of Baltimore which was a pretty cosmopolitan city and all.



ANYASO: Yes, it's a city.

Q: Well it ain't western Miami and all this. Did you find that all of a sudden you were fighting a whole different breed of cat in the people you were talking to? Or were these small city African-Americans? How did you find it?

ANYASO: Sleepy, Atlanta, of course, is a wonderful place and they thought very highly of themselves; they called it LA and I thought I know this isn't Los Angeles but that meant "lovely Atlanta". You have Peachtree Street and all of that was very pretty. As I said, Blacks had their place so you had all these Black communities. You had the Pascal brothers who were caterers and they had a restaurant that was very popular. That's where King and a lot of other people would congregate. The first time I saw him was at the Pascal's restaurant having fried chicken. You had universities in Atlanta so that made it a very pleasant place but when you left Atlanta to go to somewhere like Gadsden, Alabama, that was a whole different kettle of fish. More rural, people were less educated and I ended up working with a small newspaper there and I did a little research with the editor of that newspaper just looking at education there. For Whites I think the average level of education was fifth grade and for Blacks it was fourth grade so we're not talking high levels of education.

I came from Baltimore and as I said I lived in this little community outside in the southern portion of Baltimore so I had been sheltered all my life. Klans and things like that weren't a part of my experience but in this little town people knew who the Klansmen were. I was assigned to live with a family; when you are making \$18 a month you have no money, you don't pay rent or hotel bills with that kind of money and the families were wonderful, they took in these students. I lived with the Macafee family; it was like something out of Faulkner. The mother was the breadwinner and living with her was her father who was very, very old, he must have been in his '70s or '80s, and he was rather fragile. He never talked but he would go out and sit on the porch every day. Her sister was living with her and she should have been in a mental institution because I mean every Southern family has an eccentric relative but she really was crazy; she would be wild-eyed and just run wildly through the house. The house was one of these little wooden structures I think it had three rooms.

Q: Was this a shotgun type or something or \_\_\_\_\_?

ANYASO: I don't know shotgun or what but it was like a cottage. She had an older daughter that had a child out of wedlock, a child with blond hair and blue eyes. She had three younger daughters who were working with us in the mass meetings because the kids could really sing so we had them as part of the choir for the mass meetings. She worked as a lunchroom cook at the school. She had lived there all her life and these people were incredible. She felt that the way things were wasn't good and so she put her life on the line by...



Q: She really was because that was a...

ANYASO: ...taking in people. I remember coming home one day in the afternoon and there was this White man, old person, sitting on the steps and you know they chew tobacco in the South and spitting this stuff. I learned later that he was a member of the Klan; he was just checking to find out what was going on, what Pauline was doing with these people in this town. She never waivered, she and her children stayed involved. I remember we had a mass meeting one evening at one of the churches and this is where you didn't go to schools or community centers or things like that. There were only three gathering places; one was the church, one was the drug store owned by a Black doctor, it was a pharmacy, and one was the bowling alley. The mass meetings were at the churches and so we went to the mass meeting one evening and all of a sudden the local authorities decided to come, the local police decided to surround the building. These very hefty patrolmen and policemen and we had no idea what was going to happen to us that night; it was just very scary and very intimidating when they came into the church and that kind of thing. Many of the leaders of this local movement would stay in a motel and we understood that there was a bomb scare and that they were going to bomb the motel. It was very much like that motel in Memphis where King was assassinated; it looked like that and we were really frightened at this point. Now in comes these, what do you call them, limousine liberals. Marlon Brando, of course, who was a friend of all down trodden people, American Indians as well as African-Americans and I didn't know this but he flew in along with his pal Tony Franciosa who wasn't as well known.

Q: But a movie star.

ANYASO: But he was an actor. So they were coming to give us hope, to bring some attention to the cause and the cause is voter registration and desegregating the lunch counters and facilities, the bus stations and such places. I think they were a little afraid too that things were getting out of hand. Now the local media were talking about Communists, outside agitators and the temperature was rising. So what happened at that point was that they began to arrest some of us when we had marches and they arrested some of the men, some of the boys they weren't students they were boys. They took them to the local penitentiary and we heard that they would run them down the railroad tracks and shoot over their heads and all kinds of things that would intimidate people. They had also begun to use the cattle prods, which were these...

Q: Electric...



ANYASO: ...electric things that were like wands that had two little plugs and they would move cattle with these prods. So they were moving us, they interrupted a couple of marches and demonstrations. I had some Sunday school kids out for one of the marches and they arrested us for trespass so we had to go to jail. The poor little kids. They didn't have to go to jail but the older ones had to go to jail and they kept us for a while because I think the judge with whom we were to be arraigned had gone fishing or something so he wasn't available and we had to stay in jail for a while. You know, it's the South so lima beans is what we ate most of the time and cornbread. I tell you your systems get really clogged up on that diet but finally I think the leaders were able to get us out and we got out and went back to doing what we were doing which was voter registration. The elections weren't in the summer so I didn't stay to see what happened during that time.

But it was a typical Southern kind of crazy place. The sheriff, I think, probably was a member of the Klan and he had a Black mistress. It was the usual kind of mixture of...it was crazy. When August came I had about had it, it was stressful. Everybody was going to get into cars and drive to Washington for the march on Washington because there was going to be this big rally and John Lewis was going to be there, Martin Luther King was going to be there and it was a big deal, the unions were organizing busses to be there. At this point I was just totally exhausted and so I said, "You know what? Drop me off in Baltimore, you go ahead to Washington but I don't think I can make it." Now, of course, it was almost 100 degrees that day when they were having the march on Washington and so I went home, my parents had been worried sick and they wanted me to get ready to go to school in the fall so I watched the march on Washington on television in the comfort of my home and air conditioning.

Q: Tell me what was your impression? What were you getting at the time of Martin Luther King, Stokely Carmichael, and Marion Barry, these people whose names still resound but when you were down there were these...

ANYASO: I met Ella Baker who was one of the cofounders of SNCC, James Foreman who was the leader at the time and they knew that this was big because we were just a part of a whole network. There were people in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, there were students all over the South who were involved in these demonstrations and a lot of them were having much more trouble than we were in Gadsden. I remember being in a meeting with some of them and they were talking about the situation. I'm a coward, I think, at heart but they realized that nothing was going to happen unless blood was shed, the society at large wouldn't get excited unless blood was shed. They realized that some people would have to die. Some did in Mississippi.

Q: Did that happen while you were there?



ANYASO: Schwerner, Goodman and all of that I think that was around that summer. They went missing. So the leaders were very much aware that this was a dangerous business that they were involved with; we all knew about Bull Connor and the dogs.

Q: He wasn't very far away from you.

ANYASO: He wasn't very far away at all.

Q: This is about the police commissioner in Birmingham...

ANYASO: He certainly was.

Q: ...who became sort of a symbol of the brutality of the other side with dogs and cattle prods and fire hoses and all.

ANYASO: Yes he did, he did, but we kept singing freedom songs and having mass meetings and it eventually worked.

Q: What kept you going during these times you as a student? You were very much like some of the White kids who came down too; you came from a different world.

ANYASO: It was a different world.

Q: It was a different world because I spent a summer in Mississippi, Meridian, Mississippi, in the late '40s and this was kind of scary. I mean this was not Black Country.

ANYASO: No it wasn't, it was a very different world. But when you have people who believe in what they are doing certainly I think all of us did as I said Julian Bond was doing public relations for SNCC and he was writing poetry. Marion Berry and John Lewis I think I met them around the same time I think they came out of a Tennessee group. I always thought Marion Barry was an unprincipled person, amoral even at that point.

Q: He certainly turned out to be I mean he's...

ANYASO: Even at that point as a student.



Q: But he had been considered one of the heroes of the thing or maybe \_\_\_\_\_

ANYASO: He was, I mean he was active he even came to Washington and started Pride Incorporated youth programs for DC so yes he did good things but he wasn't a very good person even though he did some good things.

Q: He was later mayor of Washington and we are still suffering from the consequences of that.

ANYASO: Yes we are, I mean he had good ideas. He wanted to decentralize government and so instead of having all those Washington government offices in one place, services, he spread it out around the city so that people could have better access. He built, I think, the Martin Luther King library, the convention center and so he did good things but there was another side of him. We felt that everybody was doing the right thing and we had to continue in order to make it work. It wasn't the first time that there had been a march on Washington. I think A. Philip Randolph and the Pullman Porters had had an earlier one; it wasn't the first one.

Q: Well I think he threatened one and that brought Franklin Roosevelt into I can't remember but a certain amount of desegregation it wasn't armed forces and it opened things up.

ANYASO: It opened things up.

Q: There was the threat during the war.

ANYASO: Rosa Parks wasn't the first person to try the sitting down in the front of the bus but it hadn't worked. So we felt okay look this is going to work, students have a feeling that they are immortal so we were going to do it and we were going to live through it and we did, most of us.

Q: How did you feel about Martin Luther King at the time?

ANYASO: At the time, you know, we really were on the firing line as students in these little communities. We felt that Martin Luther King was interested in publicity; he wasn't in the communities doing what we were doing. Oh he would show up and give a great speech but you know we were there everyday, we were the ones going to jail; now he did go to the Birmingham jail, he did that. But more or less he was up there and we were the ones really doing it and he was getting the credit for it so we weren't very happy about Martin Luther King at the time, the NAACP and all this legal stuff, we considered them Uncle Toms we were the ones, it was SNCC.



Q: You were the foot soldiers.

ANYASO: We were, we definitely were.

Q: When you went back in '63 to school how did your studies go? Was it hard to settle back down to the real world well not the real world but the other world?

ANYASO: It was like going to outer space you know and the reentry; it was that kind of a feeling it was so different from what I had just experienced. I just couldn't get used to it and it took me about six months or so to adjust. In fact, my first impulse was to get out of there and go back to the movement but I stuck with it and gradually settled down and studied so it wasn't bad.

Q: Did you see a change in your parents or how were they as far as to what you were up to and the movement?

ANYASO: Well they didn't do what we did and they really didn't understand what we were doing. In a way they sort of bought a lot of the propaganda against King at the time, that he was a Communist and he was doing all these bad things. You know people could get hurt and they weren't really willing to go out and create problems and to start trouble. But we as students decided this was the thing to do and they wanted to support us and they always supported us. There were rallies at the churches in Baltimore, Cornerstone Baptist Church being a favorite place and when King would come to town he would go to Cornerstone whose pastor was a Reverend Kearsse. So the Black community even though it wasn't fully on board with the civil rights movement, they felt they had to support it they could not ignore it.

Q: Did you get any feel for southern Maryland I'm particularly thinking on the peninsula there trouble...this was the closest you could come to a plantation society as we had in what you call not the Deep South but...

ANYASO: But in this area.

Q: ...for both Blacks and Whites.



ANYASO: That's true. That's true. The closest I came to that was as I said once I got back to Morgan I didn't just stop. I went to classes and did my work and my grades were pretty good. In fact, they were better than the first year as a freshman when my GPA was 2.8. It was C, C-whatever, but they got better. So I was doing okay academically but I was still involved in the movement. Students at Howard University, Stokely Carmichael was at Howard University, and so Stokely and his people decided that it would be a good thing for the students, including the Morgan students, to go down to the Eastern Shore in Salisbury, Maryland. Now I had never been to Salisbury, Maryland, Route 40 I think takes you down there. The person who was down there who was the leader of the NAACP was a woman by the name, she wasn't all that old, but her name was Gloria Richardson and she had gotten some publicity out of what they were doing down there. Well, being students you liked to sleep in the morning so you don't get up very early so it took a while to get down there, to get to the bus to get down there. By the time that we got there it was late evening, it wasn't morning it was late evening and everything closes about six o'clock in places like that so nothing was open. TV cameras were waiting, we were there and nothing was open. So I'll never forget Stokely saying, "Ah, what's open here? Looks like that pool hall is open." I said, "I'm not going to integrate a pool hall, rednecks love their pool and this is their place. Why should we integrate the pool hall? We could get beaten up. It's the only place open." So I just refused, I stayed near the bus and I let Stokely and a few of his friends go into the pool hall, they were shoved out, of course, but that was my introduction to Salisbury, Maryland, the pool hall.

Later in my life once I was in the Foreign Service I was with USIA and we didn't have a public affairs officer in Sierra Leone and I had to go to Sierra Leone because there was going to be a big meeting, the Mono River Peace Commission, and they needed somebody to get things organized and deal with the media. So I left Washington to go to do that but I had to stop in Guinea on the way to Sierra Leone. It was while I was there I learned that Stokely Carmichael had been living there. Earlier I think he had been in some other African countries but he ended up in Guinea; he was very sick, in fact, he was dying of cancer. Jessie Jackson was our peace envoy, Clinton had made him a peace envoy, and he was there for these peace talks. He was crying and begging the Guinean authorities to look after Stokely; he didn't have family there or anything but somebody should look after him. So I have a picture till this day, I have to find it, of Stokely in his hospital bed; we went over to see him. He was all hooked up to tubes, and he was so thin, he was skin and bones and it was just horrible to see him like that I mean after this robust guy who can charge into a pool hall to see him like this. I think he died about a week or so later; anyway, my life sort of loops from period to period.

Q: Now you are back at school.

ANYASO: Yes.



Q: You're an African-American or Black in those days; the names keep changing...

ANYASO: Yes, we were Black in those days.

Q: ...and you are a woman. The world wasn't the woman's oyster either in those days. What did you see for yourself?

ANYASO: At Morgan?

Q: I mean where you were going?

ANYASO: Okay, well what happened and I love the Ford Foundation, love, love, love the Ford Foundation. The Ford Foundation has done a great deal to assist change in our society for the better. So the Ford Foundation had funded a program at Morgan called the political science institute and if your grades were good and I think you had to be interviewed and all of that you could become a fellow and work on special projects with the League of Women Voters or other organizations. I got an internship to become a city council intern. So I was thinking about politics until our State Senator Verda Welcome, I don't know if you've heard of her name but anyway somebody was out to kill her and so she had to have a bodyguard. I thought I don't need that, if that's what politics is I don't need that but I stuck with it; so I was a political science intern in this institute.

Also the Ford Foundation gave money to the State Department and I think Howard University and they said that there should be more minorities in the Foreign Service. So the Ford Foundation funded a program called the Foreign Affairs Scholars Program. To participate, you applied, were interviewed by a panel of professors and diplomats, and if you were selected, you received an internship in one of the foreign affairs agencies. So I got in and it was interesting because I had come from this little place in Fairfield outside of Baltimore City and I had a good friend from Fairfield, Michael McGoings, and Michael was about a year or so ahead of me at Morgan. He would find out about these programs and tell me and he applied; he didn't get it; I applied and I got it. I got into this Foreign Affairs Scholars Program so I had two internships I think in '65 and '66, at USAID. Now it wasn't that I was going out into the field and doing development work, I was in the secretariat helping to route the actions and the correspondence but it was fun. I learned a lot about what they did.

Q: Well often that type of job allows you in later life in later career you know who does what to whom. Most people like myself I never had one of those jobs and I never had a clue until the very end.



ANYASO: I did the first summer and they had me back, the same office, the same assignment. By this time I was experienced, I was a veteran, I was training other people; I had an intern I was training. But it was good. I think William Gaud was the assistant administrator and I learned a lot about USAID. Now when I graduated from Morgan in '66 they paid for graduate studies, can you believe this, this was wonderful.

Q: Who did?

ANYASO: The program, the Foreign Affairs Scholars.

Q: This was the Ford Foundation.

ANYASO: This was the Ford Foundation. I had wanted to go to Howard and my advisor in this program Vincent Browne who was at Howard and taught public administration said, "No, you are not going to Howard, you've already been to Morgan, which is an African-American college and you are not going to Howard. You are going to go somewhere else so where do you want to go?" I said, "Well, I don't want to go too far," so I went to American University. Luckily at that time they had an African studies program, which I had wanted to pursue. So I was accepted into the School of International Service at American University. So now I am on this path from the Foreign Affairs Scholars Program, it's not politics although you have political officers in the Foreign Service.

Q: Yes.

ANYASO: I wanted to do this and while I was finishing up my Master's degree in African studies at AU a friend of mine who had been one of the advisors for the Foreign Affairs Scholars Program called me up and said, "There is a job opening in the intelligence and research bureau for a foreign affairs analyst. Would you like to try for that?" I said, "What? Yes, yes." I did and I went for an interview with Ray Platig who was head of the Office of External Research and did contract research for the whole State Department. They put out a series of research booklets on each geographic area including Africa. So I interviewed and got in.

Q: This was in...

ANYASO: This was in '69 right?

Q: '69.



ANYASO: So in '69 I went in and I think because I was finishing up my M.A. they gave me a GS-7. Wow that was pretty big stuff in those days. It's a time when government employment was prestigious. It was an honor to work for the U.S. government even though I had been a civil rights organizer and had been in jail; all of my professors said, "Look ANYASO, you are never ever going to be hired by the U.S. government because you are a felon, you've been convicted." I considered jail and all my many arrests a badge of honor.

Q: Actually you never were convicted.

ANYASO: I never was, yes, but I was arrested but I considered my arrest a badge of honor and I wasn't hiding it. When I had the civil service 171 form I put on there along with everything else city council intern, foreign affairs scholars, political science institute, student non-violent coordinating committee and arrest. Were you arrested? Yes. So I didn't hide it but I did get in; I was amazed that they were so broad-minded. I went to work for them as a FSR in INR in this sort of a backwater. It was up on the eighth floor where they had the cartographers making maps.

Q: Seventh floor.

ANYASO: No, this is in the old building and there is an eighth floor over there. We were there and had a little documentation center, the spooks had their cartographers, the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), and their maps, and they were doing their thing but there is an eighth floor.

Q: Oh that's right in this old war building.

ANYASO: This is the old side of the building that's right, the old war department building. I did that for two years.

Q: What were you doing?

ANYASO: Well, we had these interagency research groups and they had people from different agencies talking about social science research that was needed for Africa. Luckily for us about this time this whole scandal with DOD doing research on university campuses broke and they were thrown off the campuses and they had all this money. So they gave it to the State Department and we were doing all kinds of research.



Q: I think the scandal as I recall or you might explain what the scandal was. It was I guess the Pentagon/CIA was sponsoring all sorts of studies and, of course, there was a tremendous taint.

ANYASO: They were conducting all kinds of social science research on these campuses. The CIA, part of it, had infiltrated youth organizations and some organizations like the Africa-American Institute that was one that they had infiltrated.

Q: They were peace movements and there were people in there.

ANYASO: They had infiltrated a lot of the movements. I forgot to mention that while I was at Morgan I was also a member of SDS, Students for Democratic Society and we were against the war in Viet Nam and I went to the teach-ins on the mall. Cliff Durand our Dissent mentor had a little Volkswagen and he would put us in this little Volkswagen and we'd go right down the beltway to Washington because it was making no sense and too many people were dying and the numbers weren't adding up. So yes we were very active on that. But anyway, here I am in the government and DOD and CIA are doing these nefarious things on campuses so we inherited the money in INR; so we were able to do much more research. Now they weren't doing that much on Africa; I had the Africa committee and we talked about what we needed to do. But we were doing more things about airlines and joint cooperatives; I remember one scholar in North Carolinas was doing something on building Boeing planes with the French and the British. Then somebody else was doing something on China because they felt there was oil in the South China Sea so that was the kind of research. Interestingly enough I got a call...now China wasn't my area but the portfolio of my officemate. We were in an office about a third of the size of this office.

Q: We are in an office about 15 feet x 15 feet I'd say.



ANYASO: A third of the size of it. I think we had a window, which made it bearable, but my officemate was doing Asia and he had this project on China and its oil. So I am in the office by myself late one evening and I get this call from the Baltimore Sun and I'm from Baltimore; I was very excited. I didn't know at the time that when you get a call from the press you send them to the public affairs bureau they answer and the spokesman and all those people answer any questions. The press knows that but he was just sort of digging around and seeing if he could find out something about the study. I said, "Oh yes there is a study." My career almost ended at that point. "Who's doing it?" "Oh well this professor at Georgetown," and I named him. So the next morning the front-page of the Baltimore Sun has this piece on this China study. So they started asking questions and I could not tell a lie so I said, "Well I got this call." I hadn't been there that long and I didn't know anything, I was totally green. So we had this post mortem on how it happened and they sort of debriefed me and I told them and talked and they said, "Ugh she didn't know what she was doing and I'm sure she won't do it again," which was true. Never in my life and I have been dealing with the press a lot in my career. But I thought oh what an awful way to begin a career in government, right? But as I said, it could have ended there, they could have been more hardnosed and said, "Out, she's really spoiled our program etc., etc.," but they didn't, they were very sympathetic. So I stayed on but anyway that was INR and I did that for two years.

Q: How about the Africa connection?

ANYASO: The African connection was that I had worked with this interagency group on Africa. So the INR Africa office and people who worked on Africa in USIA and other parts in the bureaucracy would meet and talk about social science research for Africa. Some of it was already being done out there but I don't remember ever having anything specifically on Africa.

Q: When you say social science research is this just people looking at tribalism on campuses? Boston University had a...

ANYASO: Not a lot looking at tribalism they were looking at more modern things, what was going on in these societies. As I said, they were looking at oil, they were looking at airplanes; it was all over the place. Africa I don't really remember that we gave anybody a grant to do anything so I was just holding forth with these committees and being the scribe, secretary, or secretariat for these committees. I had Africa as one part of my job but I also had the Middle East and they were doing a lot of research; I also had Europe. I remember Red Austin was INR for the Middle East; Marty Packman whom you may know, Martin Packman was doing Europe. Robert Baum who was in INR was doing Africa and Robert Baum had been one of the founding members of the African Studies Association; I discovered this fifty years later.



Q: Well Bob Baum actually was my boss at one time.

ANYASO: Are you kidding?

Q: Back in 1960-62 or so I had the Horn of Africa in INR.

ANYASO: Did you really?

Q: Yes.

ANYASO: Very quiet I think he was a deputy in that office and very quiet, meticulous, very smart and totally...

Q: He really knew Africa at a time when nobody knew Africa back then.

ANYASO: He really knew Africa. As I said he was one of the founding members of the African Studies Association.

Q: That was one of the things about 1960 that Africa was discovered by the State Department.

ANYASO: No it's true.

Q: It's really true.

ANYASO: It's absolutely true. Africa was a part of Europe.

Q: It was all colonial therefore things had to be run out of Paris or London or Lisbon and we had a consulate general in Dakar, which covered now probably about seven or eight countries or more.

ANYASO: Regional crisis.

Q: Francophone Africa and it was a very exciting time in the '60s when things were as I say it was going through this discovery, posts opening up and it was sort of high times in the Dark Continent.



ANYASO: High times and we really weren't ready for it so our offices were in some rather strange situations. I remember reading an interview I think maybe you guys did it here at the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training but one of the officers you interviewed was describing how they were having these inaugurations and they always wanted an American representative to be there at these inaugurations. Well, travel in Africa even today is a challenge and in those days it was almost impossible but I think the United Nations had a plane or something so they were able to get themselves on a plane and carry along some other diplomats from other countries and that's how they made the various inaugurations. They weren't very big offices in those days.

Q: Sometimes working out of a hotel room.

ANYASO: Working out of a hotel, one or two people, so it was really, really, really lean.

Q: One embassy I think worked out of a storefront and it had a dirt floor; eventually they had flooring put in but...

ANYASO: It was very primitive it really was but very interesting; but yes Robert Baum in Africa. Eisenhower, President Eisenhower, had sent his vice president, Nixon, to Africa and he wrote a letter, which was published in the New York Times of his recommendations. He had seen these reading rooms at least even in those days we had reading rooms, little libraries in African countries and he had seen some of those and he said how much good they did on opening up the world for these societies. He recommended in that letter that there really be a separate bureau for Africa and that was in '58, no his trip was like in '57; they established the bureau in '58. Ralph Bunche who had been a professor at Howard University and I believe and I didn't know this at the time I believe he was also a part of the office of strategic services; the old OSS was a predecessor to the CIA. So he knew something about Africa, he had studied Africa. He went on to the United Nations to be involved in decolonization. People remember him for the Middle East but he had also done something on Africa some very good work. And he had worked for the State Department briefly...

Q: Yes he had.

ANYASO: ...in an Africa office so those people who knew something about Africa were sort of out there and being brought together. The first assistant secretary for Africa had been the director general of the Foreign Service and they were just pulling people from everywhere to stand up this bureau. Sattarthwaite I believe his name was...



Q: It was Satterthwaite.

ANYASO: But you know I'm just sort of green coming into the State Department in '69 and I talked to some students last Friday and I was talking about cross cultural communication and how important it is when you are dealing with different societies and cultures. I said I didn't believe there was such a thing as culture shock; I didn't, until it happened to me two times. Once when I joined the State Department. That was culture shock, and the second time was some years later when I went to Saudi Arabia; that was deep culture shock. But I was a fish out of water, I was an African-American woman, kid, student from Baltimore and I was put into this large organization which the State Department is and most of the people there were old middle aged, if not older, White men.

Q: Yes.

ANYASO: I didn't know what to do. They weren't like me and I wasn't like them. They'd sort of like pat you on the head kind of thing.

Q: They didn't know how to treat you or not?

ANYASO: They were nice but like I said pat you on the head, good girl. So I thought I can't do this and you know I wanted a career in the foreign affairs area but this whole thing was just too strange. So I moved from INR to the bureau of educational and cultural affairs and John Richardson was the assistant secretary at the time and I was on his policy staff along with five or six other people and they were dealing with exchanges. They were dealing with people and I liked that kind of thing even though I was dealing with policy it was policy dealing with people. So one of the ladies who worked in the Latin America section, Lucy Briggs whose father, I think, was an ambassador...

Q: Everett Briggs or something.

ANYASO: That's right. Her brother was also in the Foreign...

Q: That's right.



ANYASO: ...Service. So Lucy and Mary Dennis were managing Latin American exchanges and here I was on the policy staff feeling oh my god what am I going to do in this organization; people were nice and they wanted to be helpful. But it's the kind of thing where if there is another Black anywhere near where they are do you know so and so? Or you've got to meet so and so and it was that kind of thing. So Lucy and Mary helped me to form a little support system and they got me into a business and professional women's club; women were not plentiful in the State Department and that was part of the problem too. So I had a women's support network, other women, professional women.

Q: Was this strictly a State Department doing this?

ANYASO: No, this was outside, there is a whole association of business and professional women and I joined it and joined their international foreign affairs committee and became president at some point. There were not many Blacks in the State Department and that made you feel sort of different and so some people were talking about starting a group to help to support each other but to also help to elevate the status of African-Americans. To promote them to better jobs, retain them because a lot left. Some came in and they left. So I was a part of the group that started the Thursday Luncheon Group in those days and this was back in the '70s. Then they started a women's action organization, comprised of women from USIA, State Department, and USAID. Because there weren't that many women we had to get all three agencies involved. Women faced the same problems as Blacks, and the problem was what to do about status of women in the State Department. Allison Palmer was one of the early women in the Foreign Service and was a Middle East, or considered herself, a Middle East expert. She was to be assigned to Egypt I believe but was not assigned because the State Departments decided that she would be going into a culture where they don't respect women so how could they respect her. She said, "No, I'm a Foreign Service officer, I serve wherever I'm sent and you shouldn't prevent me from going." So she sued the State Department, which helped women, I think, overall in terms of assignments so I joined the Women's Action Group.

Q: It very definitely did.

ANYASO: So I had my women's group outside, I had my women's group inside and I had my African-American group so I felt supported.

Q: Okay so let's go back to the job.

ANYASO: To the job.



Q: Was there much talk about still on the subject we had been on, when you came in was there much talk about a career A) being a Black, B) being a woman, you might say the glass ceiling. Did you feel this at the time?

ANYASO: Of course I felt the glass ceiling, you are talking about an organization where a Howard University graduate, a very good one we are not talking about C students here we are talking maybe A students could only work in a mail room. I was exposed to people who were working in the mailroom/reproduction unit and who knew the story. Blacks could work in the mailroom and they could work in reproduction, making copies and things like that with a college degree. So you need to have people assigned to good jobs. For women as long as you were doing a staff job somewhere they didn't really think of you. This wasn't the time of Carol Liaise where she became ambassador to Nepal.

Q: Nepal and the director general.

ANYASO: And the director general, the first woman director general. This was the time we had to work our way up there and we did a lot of different things. We had meetings, of course, we met with the directors general, we watched the statistics how many women, where are they, what are they doing as well as for Blacks. Gradually I think people started listening to that. Plus we also worked on the Foreign Service exam, which tended because everything is culturally oriented tended to militate against the minorities. So you know they started changing that to make it less culturally oriented, more objective and they started bringing in more minorities. For example I said the Foreign Affairs Scholars Program was to bring in more minorities. Well I have gotten in and other people had gotten in. They took the exam and came into the Foreign Service and were assigned to various posts, various jobs economic, political, whatever. This was all to the good but it doesn't just happen. People have to work at it and that's why I say I like the Ford Foundation, they worked at it.

There is still a need, we still have special programs for minorities in the State Department, we have the Pickering Fellows Program, and we have the Rangel Fellows Program (named after Congressman Charles Rangel). Look, the Foreign Service should look like America, should be diverse and that's the aim of all of these programs. I must say I've been pleasantly surprised at how diverse we are becoming. I mentor a lot of officers. I think I've got a whole stack of mentees but I mentor a couple of Rangel scholars and they bring in Pakistani- Americans, Indian-Americans, Vietnamese-Americans, we're not just talking about African-Americans we are talking about minorities so it's good. But the numbers, I think, in terms of women in the Foreign Service are looking pretty good. I think we have fewer African-Americans now in the Foreign Service than we had when I came in. I think we had about ten percent, the numbers were going the wrong way for a while, people were retiring, people leave but in the recent classes they've been bringing in people. We are hoping that...



Q: The Foreign Service has all sorts of cultures.

ANYASO: Yes, it does.

Q: I was consular officer and I came in and I like consular work so I stayed with it but I was told there is no future in it because this was a second rate organization. I recall vividly when all of a sudden three women, the three Margaret's; all were professional consular officers that is what they had done were promoted from FSO-3, which is equivalent to a colonel in those days to FSO-2. No people from consular ranks had gone that way before and all of a sudden it happened. I don't know if there was pressure put on and all of a sudden the way was open for us. I watched this and also when I started this oral history program back around 1985 or so I was really searching for senior women who had just retired but there weren't many women who had reached kind of senior ranks, I was really hurting. Today there is no problem at all.

ANYASO: There is no problem because...

Q: You can trace these developments through these oral histories if nothing else.

ANYASO: No that is very true you had to be tough and determined to make it. As you say consular officers I think when I came in Barbara Watson I think was...

Q: Yes, she made a tremendous difference.

ANYASO: She did.

Q: She really...

ANYASO: Two for the price of one an African-American woman consular officer.

Q: She came from a rather distinguished family. Her father was a judge and I mean they were in sort of the same group that Colin Powell came out of.

ANYASO: That's right.

Q: Jamaica I think and these were very high-powered people.



ANYASO: Yeah, Type A personalities.

Q: Yes.

ANYASO: When I was in the Bureau of Education and Cultural affairs we tended to have a lot of women in that bureau, as a matter of fact.

Q: Sort of schoolmarm.

ANYASO: Exactly, exactly, yes.

Q: Did you feel that?

ANYASO: Yes.

Q: At the time.

ANYASO: Schoolmarms and boy scouts, yes, because we were working with people to-people programs both government-sponsored and private. What the U.S. government puts into exchanges is a pittance compared to all the different exchanges that go on so we liaised with the boy scouts, the Farmers in World Affairs is what I think they called themselves. So we had United Nations associations but we had a lot of women, women who were working on youth programs. Marianne Sprecklemeyer and Marita Houlihan but it felt like we were out there, not cowboys but similar, working on these programs. Harriet Elam who became an ambassador to Senegal, an African-American woman, was at the White House I think doing clerical work but again you know people are determined we are going to make this happen. Her brother was a judge, she went to Boston Latin, she went to the White House to work, she came to work with us in our youth exchanges and foreign student office, went over to USIA and worked her way up through USIA and became ambassador.

Q: Where is she now?

ANYASO: She has retired but she is teaching at the Florida International University, I believe.

Q: I hope to get her.



ANYASO: You really have to get her because her story is amazing.

Q: One of the things when you were working the exchange program and as you say there were many other exchange programs going on at the same time but when you look at it for impact these exchanges probably have far more positive effects than all our foreign policy initiatives than almost anything else over the years. I mean people come to the United States most end up with an extremely positive impression because we are good hosts with minor exceptions and people go back and carry on the American word.

ANYASO: They are bowled over because I think on the whole Americans are very open, very warm, very nice people. We had a visitor not too long ago, two years ago, from Africa and I forget which country maybe it was Sierra Leone or one of the West African countries. He was blind but we made arrangements, we had escorts to go around with these groups and things like that and they ended up somewhere in the mid-West. There was a doctor out there who examined him and decided that his sight could be restored and took it upon himself to work with the medical doctors out there in the hospital to restore his sight; now that's an extreme case. He'll never be the same. He will be forever grateful.

But in lesser ways I remember I left policy work in CU because I'd always, always...I had seen this opera Aida and I'd always liked Egypt. I wanted to know more about Egypt and this job opened up in the Middle East exchanges office for an Egypt program officer and I left policy to do that. In fact, I walked away and I tell my kids now never walk away from a promotion. I was in the process of being promoted from GS-11 to GS-12 but they were insisting they needed somebody right away so I left a GS-12 promotion and went to work on the Egypt desk. So I'm working in exchanges and we have this group of students from Egypt, we reestablished our relations I think in '77 so we were on the cutting edge of these relationships. These students came in and they were so timid, they'd never been outside Egypt and I don't even know if they had been to Cairo but they were very timid. The African-American Institute was programming them. They were going to take them around to different towns, meet people and have home stays and I thought to myself, "I hope they make it." So they came back through Washington and they came by to see me. I didn't recognize them. I mean these programs, I think in those days were 30 days and now they are 22 days, but in those days a whole month. In one month they had become entirely different people. They were speaking American slang, they were so outgoing, they were talking; you couldn't shut them up. I thought oh my God what's happened to them. They had been exposed to this totally open society, to other youth and how things were done, students, and it had changed them and I'm sure when they went back they continued to think about and to exemplify that experience.



We have a program called the YES Program, Youth Exchange Study Program, students come at the high school level, stay for a year and go back. I have run into some of the kids who went from Nigeria. I met them in Sokoto, which is at the end of the world, and they had started groups in their community. Americans love to start groups, start associations, start committees, start something, volunteer and these kids had seen this. So they went back and because there are often disputes in these communities over water or land or something but they started these little peace committees and they were the leaders and they were helping people to solve disputes. So yes, these programs are amazing and over the years I have become a true believer in the power of these exchanges.

One woman came on our Hubert Humphrey Program, which is for development professionals, to come to the U.S. to do a year of study and training. Usually they have a half-year on a university campus and I think AU has Humphrey fellows, as does the University of Maryland, University of Minnesota, where Humphrey was from, and then they go back. I have met Humphrey...I'm still in touch with Humphrey fellows who are doing marvelous things because of what they learned in the United States and they think of some of their host families not as people I visited and stayed with but as their real families. One woman says I have to send this letter to my host mother and when she lost her own mother she got in touch with her host mother who commiserated and held her hand at a distance but they feel that they are a part of something. So yes, these exchange programs work outside of our official relationships and policy relationships. These people to-people relationships are very effective.

Now studies have been done about favorability or opinion polls, how favorable are you to the U.S. and this and that. When they did it recently, this is post 9/11, Africa was the only geographic area where the favorability was still very, very high and they also realized that people who had visited the United States, they found this in their research, have a more favorable opinion than those that had not. So we know it works.

Q: We've gone through a very difficult time without it being political but just being practical during the Bush II administration where the policies of many of the ones who had been rather confrontational with other countries this has not left a favorable impression of America.

ANYASO: No, but you know whenever I had to go out and give speeches, talk about our Africa policy during this time of George W. Bush I'd always have to say he likes Africa, he has done more for Africa than I think any other administration.

Q: Yes, very much so particularly on Aids.



ANYASO: HIV and Aids, the President's Emergency Relief program for HIV/AIDs. Not only did he make sure the money was there, he made several trips to Africa, he would always meet with mothers with HIV/ Aids and you know they started preventing the transmission of aids from mother to child, which is a big part of the AIDs program and he would meet with them and the children. I organized some programs when I was in Nigeria when he came out. No, that is an extremely good program.

Q: Yes.

ANYASO: Diagnostic clinics were set up so that they could test people. We had peer review groups when we started so that young people could talk to other young people, all this created awareness of the disease. He started this extraordinary program, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which gives block grants. You know, foreign affairs is like everything else, there are fads and there are trends. In the '60s when we were starting off with a lot of the developing countries we had infrastructure programs, we were helping to build roads, we were helping to build bridges, we were helping to build hospitals and schools and then you know it wasn't the thing to do, USAID didn't do that any more. Rockefeller didn't do that anymore, everybody decided we were out of that business. The Rockefeller Foundation was doing a lot but they got out of it. They funded the research for the Green Revolution. But these countries still need roads. They still need hospitals and they still need clinics and the Chinese know this and they are doing that, they are building those.

So the Millennium Challenge Corporation gives grants to these countries. Countries have to meet criteria and make reforms. They can't be too corrupt and they have to reach a certain level on education, health and other social indices. There are 16 criteria to even be considered and then they have to go through a lot of stages, reach a threshold to get money. I think I read in the paper this morning that President Wade is here from Senegal to get a big grant from the Millennium Challenge Corporation. I think he plans to use his grant for agricultural projects and an airport. Ghana has also received a grant. The only criticism I have of the program is that it takes too long to get the money to the countries. This is a program developed by the Bush administration. So I have nothing but good things to say about that administration and the hope is that this administration (the Obama administration) will continue those programs.

Q: Back when you moved to Egyptian Affairs...

ANYASO: Yes

Q: ...this would be Nasser time still wasn't it?



ANYASO: No, this is Sadat.

Q: This is after...

ANYASO: This is Anwar Sadat and relations were reestablished in the '70s so this is the late seventies.

Q: In the '70s okay.

ANYASO: And Kissinger is doing his shuttle diplomacy and he is setting up these binational commissions like Johnny Appleseed did with apple trees he is setting up these binational commissions. When I was working with Egypt he set up a binational commission with Egypt. Now, of course, he is at the foreign ministerial level but then they had different working groups and they had an education working group which our bureau, our deputy assistant secretary I think it was Bill Hitchcock at the time, our deputy assistant secretary was chairing the working group. Well he, of course, doesn't do the work, they have to have a worker bee work with them so I was very pleased to be the working group bee to work with him to welcome exchanges of Egyptians to the United States. I remember the head of Cairo University came, there was an education group that came to the United States, and I was helpful, happy to program them while they were in the United States. I remember taking them to the 8th floor of the State Department on the other side where we have the Ben Franklin room and all of this.

Q: This is the formal ceremonial...

ANYASO: The formal ceremonial rooms where ambassadors are sworn in and other people, beautiful rooms. They didn't used to be beautiful when I first came into the Foreign Service in the '60s they were horrible, dusty, musty rooms and Clement Conger became the driving force and curator to refurbish those rooms and they are beautiful now.

Q: He was able to put his finger on all the glitterati...

ANYASO: The money.

Q: ...of American social life and say won't you donate an antique desk from a certain era.

ANYASO: Donate a desk; donate money so that we can buy a desk, so that we can work on the woodwork.



Q: The roof yes.

ANYASO: The curtains, the chandeliers, the secretary's, the portraits, they are absolutely gorgeous. The Ben Franklin Room and my favorite is the Thomas Jefferson Room, that little alcove which is light blue like these maps and has a little statue of Thomas Jefferson. People don't realize he was our secretary of State, the first I think. So anyway I took them through the rooms and we had just gotten there and I think it was Assistant Secretary William Hitchcock who had just gotten a brochure from Delaware. They were just opening up the Winterthur Museum, which the du Pont family has funded.

Q: The du Pont...

ANYASO: It's an early American museum.

Q: It has every kind of furniture that you can think of. It is gorgeous.

ANYASO: Oh Early American, it is beautiful and has beautiful grounds. So I took them to Winterthur and to the University of Delaware, which had the first solar house in the United States. I took them to Wolf Trapp and we had a picnic out there and a concert so I got to program them and got to know them as people. We had pretty good relationships with the Egyptians and I think that based on those working groups and this commission that that set a lot of the groundwork for the Camp David Accords which were to come a little later.

Q: Some of the universities particularly well and most parts of the world; but particularly in the Middle East and actually Latin America are really set trends. This is where young people go and if you can hit the faculty and all that's sort of poisoning the minds of the kids against the American way or something like that...

ANYASO: Well that's true.

Q: ...makes a tremendous difference.



ANYASO: And you find that in these universities, the faculties interestingly enough because I would have thought it was the social sciences and maybe the humanities faculties where you have all this going on in being intellectual, etc., etc. and being leaders. The medical schools, the science faculties are usually the ones where we tend to have good rapport and relationships and exchanges. Maybe it's because they are used to scientific research and being objective.

Q: Also I mean if you have a good rapport with a scientific establishment or medical establishment in the United States and that's what you are doing you are really going to benefit from them quite often on this. I mean there is no particular propaganda; how you treat a microbe is how you tread a microbe.

ANYASO: Exactly.

Q: Where as to use a diplomatic term the bull shit courses, political, science, economic these get in there and everybody ...

ANYASO: People are a little skittish.

Q: Which is true in our universities there \_\_\_\_\_

ANYASO: But I found that so on this group of educators who came. Quite a few of them, the University of Cairo president himself was a scientist, and then there was a medical doctor and then there was somebody from the ministry of culture who came. But these were top-level people and we had extremely good relationships. Later on Anwar Sadat visited the United States with his wife who had started a foundation, the Hope and Light Foundation, I believe, and being a lowly program officer I got to help with her program. We had lunch in the Thomas Jefferson Room and invited all the important people to meet her there. I also took her to Gallaudet University because it was a very good institution, the only university in the U.S. for the deaf. She got to see what was happening, the kind of education they were getting there and how they were just like everybody else. She really enjoyed that.

Q: She taught at American U later didn't she later or not?

ANYASO: Later I think she did, I think she did and lived in Virginia.

Q: She had her women's programs in Egypt didn't she?



ANYASO: She had her women's programs and very rightly so; they had excellent diplomats. In those days or maybe it was just me personally in those days I did more with the embassies than I did recently with the various embassies I had to work with. So I was on very good terms with the Egyptian ambassador and his staff; a very decent guy Ashraf...

Q: \_\_\_\_\_

ANYASO: Ghorbal, Ambassador Ghorbal.

Q: Ghorbal.

ANYASO: Ashraf Ghorbal was exceedingly short. I called him the little prince, you know the Antoine de Saint-Exupéry story about the little prince and the big eyes, and he was just like the little prince. He was a marvelous man and his wife was an Amazon; they were the oddest-looking couple. She was very buxom and she got into the newspaper because I think at the time Jimmy Carter...Hamilton Jordan was a good ole boy from the South and he saw this Amazon who was very buxom and he said something about her breasts being like the pyramids and this made the Washington Post Style section. It made her famous. But no, they were very, very great people the Egyptians.

Q: Well it was a particularly good time at that time because Sadat was becoming the darling because he was willing to break the mould.

ANYASO: He broke the mould he did what he said he was going to do at Camp David, the Sinai Peninsula, everything he said he was going to do he did. Menachem Begin on the other side, the Israeli head of state, didn't do everything he said he was going to do. There was an important letter that mysteriously disappeared and it was a letter about the West Bank and setting up a state for the Palestinians. The letter just mysteriously disappeared and he claimed he never knew anything about it but to this day President Jimmy Carter has never, well he is dead now, forgiven him for that action. But Sadat was the darling and he even went to Jerusalem and everybody was so excited.



I remember I took a trip to the Middle East right after that to visit our Fulbright programs so I think at this point I was the branch chief for the Fulbright Program in the Middle East and South Asia; the territory stretched from Bangladesh to Morocco. It was a huge swath of countries and Israel was included among them. I had been to Jordan and Egypt and some other places and I went to Israel. I remember having dinner with our director of the Fulbright Foundation, Daniel Krauskopf. You know there are a lot of dual citizens who are Americans and Israelis. So the head of the Foundation was a dual citizen but he had married an Israeli woman and I think he was her second husband. So I'm rhapsodizing about Sadat and how he went to Jerusalem and what a great day this was for the Middle East and people could get together and yada, yada, yada. She was hostile. She almost spit at me. She was hissing like a cat and she said, "What's so great about that? Let me tell you..." and then she went on and on about the wars, the Arab-Israeli Wars, and she had had a son who was killed in the wars and she was a poet mind you. She was crying and I was telling Dan, his name was Dan, I said, "Get me out of here. I can't take this." The emotion was overwhelming. They don't forget and it's really a very deep feeling on both sides, Arab and Israeli. So people shouldn't think that it's easy trying to get them together on anything because they remember everything.

Q: I have to say I've been doing this for almost 25 years, these oral histories, and talked to people who go from at the time Israel was created in '48 up to now who have given years of devoted work in trying to bring about peace and it is worse now than it has ever been; it's quicksand.

ANYASO: It's more than sad...

Q: It's tragic.



ANYASO: My little love affair with Sadat and how great he was and we had the exchanges. We were doing a lot with private groups who were bringing youth to the U.S. They were bringing youth from the Arab countries and Israeli kids and getting them together at Harvard and other places. We also had a special program at the Salzburg Seminar. They conducted seminars on very topics and they would bring participants together from different countries. They had participants from East and West Europe but they included participants from Arab countries and Israel. When they assassinated Anwar Sadat after all the work, after all the effort I couldn't take it anymore and that's when I decided I'd get into African affairs. The Middle East burns you out very quickly and then you don't see any progress and then you get more settlements and people on both sides become more intransigent. So when he was assassinated I thought after all that I can't take this any more. So I was working in the Middle East office of the US Information Agency at that time that we had had a merger from the State Department to the USIA and then I went on to do the Fulbright Program for the Middle East. But once he was assassinated I just went to Africa. In fact, I called up the director of the Africa office and I said, "Do you need any good people to work on Africa? It was my major and I've never really done anything with it all these years." I had worked on the Middle East. for 16 years.

Q: With the Middle East did you run across some of the pressure...things on much of our Middle East policy has been dominated by the American Jewish plus other groups including fundamental Christians about friends of Israel who monitor everything that is done on dealing with the Middle East and make sure that we don't upset the Jewish plus other allied voters and that; in other words the internal American politics.

ANYASO: Yes, it is very sensitive and it can get very nasty. Personally I was okay, for example there are Jewish American organizations, which assist us in programming our visitors from Israel and also the student programs that we were working with. I got to meet them and became good friends with a youth exchange program in New York but you always have the feeling that they were keeping an eye on how things were going, they wanted to manage this U.S.-Israeli relationship. As I say, we dealt with the media a lot and there was one journalist, we know about AIPAC (American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee) and all of that but there was this one...

Q: That's the American-Israeli Political Action Committee.

ANYASO: ...public affairs committee, I think.

Q: Oh the public affairs committee.



ANYASO: Yes, and so there was this one American journalist, I think she wrote for the Washington Post, Georgie Anne Geyer? They would follow her around, she tended to be more pro Palestinian or pro Arab and this was not a good thing they felt for someone to be doing. So they would follow her around. She would go out and speak to different groups and they would follow her and heckle or question her, hostile questions and things like that. So it can be rather upsetting to be in this kind of environment.

Later on when I was on an exchange program with the Department of Defense, State-DOD exchange program, and so I got to work on the Joint Staff at DOD for two years, I became their Africa expert, their Africa action officer. There was this woman, I couldn't figure out who she was or what she was doing but she just appeared. She would look at what people were doing and being buddy-buddy and want to talk and this and that. As I say, I was doing Africa but the rest of the guys were doing the Middle East and she was trying to get information out of them; it was just the strangest kind of thing. All these people kind of glom on to you and she was a Jewish-American and probably still doing that.

Q: It's been and I'm stating a personal prejudice but I think that  $\frac{1}{2}$  migri  $\frac{1}{2}$  groups have seen this with the Serbian-Americans and Croatian-Americans. I have dealt with the Balkans in my career but looking at the Jewish-Americans they've given so much support to Israel that I think they have been actually a negative influence on Israeli policy in the long run by not allowing good relations to develop with the Palestinians; they've supported the extremists. This is going to lead, I think, to disaster.

ANYASO: Well two things. I always said and I think it is happening now and happening more and more every year when the Arab-Americans organize and they have their groups this will provide a counter-weight and maybe we can get more objective, or balanced policies. The other thing is the American-Jewish community is very much a generational thing; understood, supported, the ties are very strong but the European-Jews who ran Israel, what's her name, Meir?

Q: Golda Meir.

ANYASO: Golda Meir and the one with the patch?

Q: Moshe Dayan.

ANYASO: Moshe Dayan, okay that whole generation who ran Israel, right? Good strong relations. Israeli's have been born there now and who have grown up and have been educated I mean the fellow who is the prime minister now...



Q: Netanyahu.

ANYASO: Yes, he's a Sabra. They are a whole different kettle of fish and I remember when we were doing our youth groups I remember the Israeli students being wonderful, I mean they were like Europeans and Americans, they were good kids. Then I started getting these kids who were rowdy, loud, rude who broke that mould, that stereotype and they were the Sabras. So I think that the relationship between the generation that's now in charge and our American Jewish community isn't quite the same; it's not the same as it was earlier. I don't know what that means. I know there are some extremists who leave this country and go there and live on the kibbutzim and settlements and create havoc but there are also people who consider themselves real Israelis and they are the ones who want to decide the future of their country.

Q: It's a problem that will be with us I think at least for our time. When did you switch over to African affairs?

ANYASO: As I said, after Sadat was assassinated I began to think I just couldn't take the Middle East any more and so it must have been about 1984 because and this is how my Foreign Service career started; I was a civil servant up to now. I talked to my good friend John Clingerman whom I had met some years back in the '70s. John had been assigned to CU (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs). CU was like Siberia, you would mess up in the Foreign Service and they would send you to CU.

Q: Culture...

ANYASO: Rehabilitate you and then send you back out, right? A little backwater in the State Department but we had great fun. Anyway, John had been too vocal about Viet Nam and they had sent him over to clean him up in CU so I had gotten to know him then. Now he is director for Africa and it's 1984 and I'm saying I don't know what to do, I can't do the Middle East anymore. Also I had gotten my GS-12 and my GS-13...

Q: This is your rank.

ANYASO: Civil service.

Q: Civil service ranks.



ANYASO: So I had moved up into a mid-level but to go higher than a GS-13 you can't be a generalist you really have to be something, you have to be a specialist, you have to be a budget officer, you have to be a management officer, you have to be something you can't just be a generalist and I liked being a generalist. So where did they have most of the generalists? In the Foreign Service. So I said, "John I'm at a crossroads, I don't quite know what to do. What about an Excursion Tour?" In the Foreign Service they allow their civil service officers to have a special Foreign Service appointment, it's called an Excursion Tour and it can be extended up to five years. You can go overseas and serve in an embassy and be a Foreign Service officer. He said, "I just happen to have an opening in Lagos." Naï½ve that I was, I didn't know that that's one of the hardest posts to fill in the Foreign Service. It's a real challenge. But he just happened to have this opening so he said, "How would you like to go to Lagos?" "Yes," I said, "what is it you want me to do?"

Q: I want to stop right here and we will pick this up the next time...

ANYASO: What do you mean the next time?

Q: Huh?

ANYASO: How many of these interviews are there?

Q: Oh, keep going. Good heavens, listen I've been working with Tom Pickering now for about six or seven years and I'm on my 40th one. I'm not going to take you that long but we will pick this up the next time about 1985 would you say?

ANYASO: '84

Q: '84 when you are off to Lagos.

ANYASO: I was off to Lagos.

Q: Today is the 30th?

ANYASO: Today is the 29th.



Q: Today is the 29th of September 2009 with Claudia Anyaso. Claudia you had some after interview thoughts that you wanted to put in.

ANYASO: After thoughts, yes. I spoke a little bit about my college years and I went to American University and I recall that I had mentioned that my husband is from Nigeria. Well we were students at American university and one big thing I forgot to add was that he is from Eastern Nigeria and while we were in grad school together Biafra happened. So one of the things that we got involved with was support for the Biafra War. He was a member of the Nigerian Student Association of America and very active in that. We got involved because once Biafra seceded from the Federal Republic of Nigeria, there was a civil war. A lot of bad things were happening to the Eastern Nigerians, the Ibos. There were pictures of these poor starving babies with the Kwashiorkor, which meant that they had little blonde heads because they were malnourished and things like that. Many of the Ibo's were Catholic and we spent a lot of time going to candlelight vigils over at Catholic University. I guess we were trying to convince the United States government to do something about helping these poor people who needed humanitarian assistance.

Later in my career when I was assigned to Nigeria I went to Eastern Nigeria. Everybody knows in World War II Hitler had a bunker; well in Eastern Nigeria there was a bunker for Ojukwu who was the head of the secessionist movement. So I went over there a little later on and I saw photos that they had blown up of some of the soldiers who had fought on the Biafran side; they had no weapons, they had sticks. Here were teenage boys with sticks fighting a mechanized army. I hadn't realized that when I was a student but I did know that these people were starving, the kids were dying and a lot of the Ibo priests those who were studying here in the United States had rallied the Catholic Church on their behalf and there was a movement to get food and medical supplies to them. I think the government finally got involved on the humanitarian side and did some drops of assistance to them. I wanted to put that in there because my husband was very much involved in this and I told him he should write about this. He was against the war and he was against the secession because he didn't think it was going to help anybody but he wanted to help the children.

Q: What tribal group did he come from?

ANYASO: He came from the Ibo's.

Q: The Ibo's were basically the Biafran's?

ANYASO: That's right.



Q: Then the Yoruba's which were to the North?

ANYASO: West.

Q: West.

ANYASO: The rest of the country primarily was if you divide it into three the Ibo's in the East, the Yoruba in the West, and the Hausa/Fulani in the North. Well the federal government was at that point the West and the North and the Biafran's were trying to secede over in the East.

Q: I forgot to ask you. Have you ever traced your roots? Do you have any idea where your family came from or not?

ANYASO: You know you have these mental lists of things to do when you have time. I said I will do my DNA or something at some point and I'll find out where I'm from. I wasn't as clever as Alex Hailey in tracing...

Q: He wrote a book called Roots.

ANYASO: There is not a personal relationship to Nigeria but there was a Nigerian very early on who was sold into slavery who eventually got to Europe and wrote his narrative like Frederick Douglass had a narrative of his life in slavery. Well this Nigerian prince from the East wrote his narrative of slavery; he had two names, Olaudah Equiano; but that was not very far from where my husband lived. Another thing, well I have some more things that I wanted to add on that previous interview.

When I was working on Egypt, the love of my life, one of the major things that happened to me is that I got involved with the first visit of the Tutankhamen exhibit to the United States; this was a big deal. King Tut had been discovered; the Cairo museum had wonderful things.

Q: This goes back to the 1920s I think.

ANYASO: It went back to the 1920s I think Carter, they were British I believe.

Q: They were British, yes, and there was the curse of the tomb and all sorts of stuff.



ANYASO: Yes and as a matter of fact a couple of them died when they exhumed or discovered the tomb. But anyway I was the desk officer and they were starting on this exhibit. Thomas Hoving, I don't know if that name rings a bell, but he was up in New York as the director of MOMA.

Q: The curator of the Museum of Modern Art.

ANYASO: The Museum of Modern Art, yes. So the man was just incredible, helped the Egyptians to select the items a lot of alabaster as well as gold in the exhibit. The museum was in horrible shape, I mean horrible, the Cairo Museum was dirty, and it was dusty.

Q: Where was this?

ANYASO: In Cairo where they have these artifacts, so one reason for bringing the show to the United States was to raise some money to clean up the museum and they did that because Thomas Hoving had reproductions made of the items, the artifacts, which sold like hotcakes and they did raise a lot of money; beautiful, beautiful reproductions. So anyway here I am sitting on this desk in the State Department and one day I got this telephone call and it was somebody from the Pentagon. He said, "Are you the Egypt desk officer?" I told him I was and he says, "Well there is this King Tut exhibit and the ambassador in Egypt..." who at the time was Hermann Eilts. I don't know if that name rings a bell.

Q: Who was in fact...

ANYASO: Legendary, legendary.

Q: He was a great Arabist. I met him in Saudi Arabia when I was in Tehran.

ANYASO: The man was incredible he really was so smart. Anyway, they called him Hermann the German because he was very Prussian and he ran his embassy like that.

Q: I went on a picnic with him and he had his coat and tie on, this was in Saudi Arabia at the beach.



ANYASO: Yes, there is no informality there, none. So Ambassador Eilts, which is a funny German spelling, E-I-L-T-S, had called them and said, "You know there is a security problem here. Basically he was lying. There was no security problem. The Egyptians couldn't afford to ship the show to the United States. So, "We have this security problem and we don't know how safe it will be to ship this exhibition to the United States. We need security, we need somebody to protect them, we need the Sixth Fleet to bring them to the United States." So I said, "Let me talk to the other desk on this because I was on the cultural desk. We had a country desk officer for Egypt, in fact, the Egypt desk as we did with certain countries was very elaborate, there was a director for the Egypt desk and that was Free Matthews who later became I think ambassador to Egypt. Free was on the desk so I called over there and met with him and several of his people and said, "I got this phone call and it seems that your, our ambassador, has claimed there is a security problem and he'd like the military to ship the show to the United States." He laughed, he says "There is no security problem. We don't know about it and can't help." So I didn't want to call the military guy back and tell him that the State Department was not going to be helpful especially since I had learned from the military that the ambassador had already collected artifacts, these reproductions and he was going to make a special presentation to the commander of the Sixth Fleet and have these artifacts in the State room. They were ready to go. They only needed the State Department to sign off on it. So I explained this to Freeman Matthews and he still said "no". So I said, "What do you think I can do about this. We have to bring it?" "There is the museum in New York and it's coming to Washington and it's going to Texas."

Q: This thing is legendary; this is probably the biggest exhibit you could image from antiquity.

ANYASO: Amazing and the way they presented it was also amazing but anyway we have to get it here. So I finally wore Free down and he said, "Why don't you go talk to the legal people, talk to the lawyers and see if there is any problem on whether we can really do this." I talked to Eli, who's name I am not going to remember now and I said, "Eli this is a big deal. These museums are all ready for this exhibit and it can't come because there is a security problem." He said, "What kind of security problem?" I said, "The ambassador said there is a security problem and we've got to bring it." Eli sort of smelled a rat but nevertheless he signed off and I trotted back over to Free and I said, "Free, the lawyers say there is no problem, we can do this." He said, "Okay, but I really need to talk to the ambassador" so he called Ambassador Eilts who persuaded him and we were able to ship it. The Sixth Fleet loaded it on, they shipped it to Norfolk and then they put it on trucks and trucked it up to Washington. I thought that was quite an accomplishment.

Q: Oh it is quite an accomplishment. I saw the exhibit.

ANYASO: Did you?



Q: It was wonderful.

ANYASO: Sold out everywhere. I think this was back in the late seventies. Having helped to bring this exhibit I had to go see it so I went twice. I went once; I went twice because you couldn't see it in one showing or one visit and every time there were these long lines. You would stand for hours trying to get in to see it but the way they had done it was they had these big photos blown up and you saw the actual cave, the excavation and the people. It was dark it was almost smelling like a cave and then you would go into that, you would get a little farther and there was something else. Finally you came out and there was light everywhere and there was gold, there was alabaster, it was incredible. There was this chair that King Tut had sat in. It was all gold, it was amazing. So as I was going for the third time my husband said, "Are you sick, what is your problem?" I said, "Well it is so beautiful and we may never see anything like this again." So I claim that as one of the biggest things I ever participated in in my early career in the State Department.

The other thing that I thought was memorable was the China task force that I served on. Before I became Ms. Egypt, I had worked on the policy staff and one of things we were doing was policy for educational and cultural exchanges. We had had this breakthrough with Nixon who had opened up China but he didn't do it all by himself. Before anything happened there was this ping-pong, table tennis team, that had gone to China, the first Americans who had gone to China. That was the breakthrough before the diplomats got involved. So as cultural types we were very interested in this sports exchange.

Q: It was known later as ping-pong diplomacy.

ANYASO: That is exactly right. So we wanted to build on that ping-pong diplomacy and so we set up a little task force in the cultural bureau of the State Department. We had a guy who had been the first Fulbright student in China, the very first student Fulbrighter was not to Europe but to China; I think it was 1948 or 1949; he was on our task force. He still wrote Chinese, he wrote his notes in Chinese characters and so he said, "What to do?" So we got a contract agency that had been doing exchanges with the Soviet Union and we talked to them about arranging some private student exchanges to China; that was another breakthrough. So here I've helped with the breakthrough on Egypt and I was involved with China.

The final thing I wanted to mention was Beverly Carter. Beverly Carter had been a journalist I think with the Pittsburgh Courier News. It was an African-American newspaper in Pittsburgh. Bev had come into the Foreign Service and was serving as our ambassador to it wasn't Zaire at the time I guess it was the Congo. He got himself into trouble over a hostage situation.



Q: I think actually it was either Rwanda or Burundi.

ANYASO: Was he?

Q: That's where there was something with the hostage situation.

ANYASO: I think it was really the Congo, I'll have to go back and get the clippings; it was the Congo. This had nothing to do with my job but it had to do with the Thursday Luncheon Group which we had started to help Black officers in the State Department. So Bev was out there talking to these people who had taken these hostages and Secretary Kissinger had said, "We don't negotiate with hostage takers, that's against our policy, we are not going to do it." Well Bev kept talking and Kissinger got very angry and decided he was going to fire this ambassador because he wasn't following orders, he was talking to these people. The Thursday Luncheon Group said, "We can't let him do that, he can not fire this ambassador. I don't know if you ever met Bev Carter; first of all he was Bev because his mother had made this awful decision to name him Beverly so he was Bev. He was one of our most outstanding African-American officers and we could not see the Secretary of State firing this man for obtaining freedom for these people. So, we said, "What to do?" He's a former journalist what can we do so we ran around and talked to some of the other Black officers at the State Department so we said, "Okay, what we'll do is throw this big reception and we will invite all of the important diplomats and the diplomatic community and we'll make Bev our guest of honor and we will also invite Secretary Kissinger so that he will know that he has a lot of support. You can't just fire this man without causing a lot of ripples and splashes and so that is what we did we went to 18th and K at the time, we had this big reception, sent invitations to everyone in Washington and he didn't fire him. So that was one of the early initiatives that the Thursday Luncheon Group had.

Q: Let's talk a little more while we are on it on the Thursday Luncheon Group. I know a friend of mine, Ruth Davis, and I used to talk about being involved in this.

ANYASO: She was involved later on.

Q: But what was the genesis of this and during your time what sort of things was it doing?



ANYASO: Well it's always a numbers game and so one of the things that we did Richard Fox, Ambassador Fox, who was ambassador to Costa Rica was a member. At one time he had been the EEO (Equal Employment Office) in the State Department so we had people like that in the organization plus our officers and we would try to get in to see the Secretary. We would pull out our numbers and we would say, "You know the State Department is not representative, they only have X number of African-Americans" and we would talk about how we could recruit more, retain more, you can't go around firing people we didn't have the numbers "and promote more." We weren't asking people to be promoted without merit but just don't forget they are there, if they are doing a good job at least recognize that. So those were the kinds of things we were doing and we'd meet the first Thursday of every month.

There used to be a Foreign Service Club at 21st and E and we would meet upstairs; I think now that is where AFSA (American Foreign Service Association) meets, they have their offices in what used to be the club. We would meet up there and talk about the things that we needed to do on recruitment, going to the universities primarily the historically Black colleges and recruiting people like that. But as I said, there were also these foreign affairs scholars, the program that I had been in to bring me in and we wanted to keep that going. We also wanted a lateral entry program because it's the numbers game, yes, you can bring people in at the bottom and work them up but you also needed to bring in people in the middle to do something about the middle grades. So we wanted a mustang program and we got one; there was one for a while. AFSA, which is the American Foreign Service Association, was not in favor of these kinds of programs and so there was friction on that kind of thing; I think at one point they had a petition against it. Even some of my good friends who were African-Americans signed the petition.

Q: Well there is always the problem of anything that smacks of being a quota or something like that gets problems going. I imagine today if you are looking at figures Hispanics represent the largest minority in the United States and they are probably under represented.

ANYASO: Yes, they have been under represented but now they have a special recruitment officer who goes out to recruit Hispanics into the Foreign Service just as they have a lot of people who are looking at African-Americans and women. So they have it all sort of organized now so that they can go out and so they go out to universities where there are large, California, large groups in Florida, New York, large groups of Hispanics and they try to recruit them so we are getting more now than we used to. Native Americans are another group that's very much underrepresented. We are getting more, as many as we can to go out to the Indian colleges in the United States to do that; so that is the kind of thing we are doing. You mentioned Ambassador Davis who is an icon, I think, among the African-American officers, in fact, all the officers. She was ambassador to Benin, Consul General in Barcelona, she was in Japan and she was Director General of the Foreign Service.



Q: She was also American services officer in Naples when I was consul general.

ANYASO: Was she? The woman is an Amazon, tall and in the good old days, not now, when she has her hair all done out...once you get older in the Foreign Service you begin to look very conventional but in those days she had an afro. I saw a picture of her in her younger days when she was serving in West Africa and she had on her dashiki and she had on her pants and she had her Afro and she looked magnificent. But yes she's a great one and she became director of FSI (Foreign Service Institute) at one point too.

Q: Yes.

ANYASO: But anyway she headed up the Thursday luncheon group in the later years here; that was nice.

Q: Let's get back on schedule.

ANYASO: Yes.

Q: Where did we leave off?

ANYASO: We left off at Lagos. I had gone over to see my good friend who was heading up, in USIA, the Africa area office. I talked to him about an Excursion Tour as a civil servant at that point. Let me back up a little bit. In the Foreign Service there were certain restrictions on people you can marry and being assigned to their country of origin. For example, I had married a Nigerian and I could not be assigned to Nigeria. The rules were there but they changed so at this point they have changed the rules so I go to see my friend and I say, "I'm interested in an Excursion Tour where do you have an opening?" John Clingerman said to me, "We have an opening in Lagos." They always have openings in Lagos all the time even now. It is one of the hardest posts to recruit for in the Foreign Service. It's big, it's sprawling, it's dangerous and if you talk to any of the diplomatic security people, it's a security problem...

Q: Mainly because of crime.



ANYASO: Because of crime, yes, it's sort of like New York. They have gangs, area boys they call them, but anyway a lot of people don't want to put themselves in harm's way, this is before 9/11 where we are all putting ourselves in harms way. But in those days you tried to protect yourself a little bit by the assignments you took. So he said, "Oh, we've got this opening in Lagos, we need somebody out there to clean up things, there is a CAO job that's opening up; CAO, cultural affairs officer," and I've always loved culture, music and dance and literature and art. Cultural affairs officers were in charge of all those cultural programs, libraries, Fulbright program, students and professors, this was heaven. So I said, "Lagos, I don't know if I can do this." Well, of course, I hadn't talked to my husband; every time I can go to Nigeria he pushes me out the door. So we decided together that this would be a great opportunity for me to get my feet wet in the Foreign Service so I did.

In 1984 we did the paperwork and I went to Lagos as a cultural affairs officer. I think Thomas Smith was the ambassador at that time. It's interesting how you can be assigned to a country, especially young officers who come in, they should know this. You can be an econ, political officer or consular officer and then go back and become consul general or ambassador. Well Thomas Smith had been an econ officer in Nigeria and now he was back as ambassador and they have this beautiful old colonial building as the residence. Old, old trees, lots of foliage and right at the back of the compound is the lagoon, Lagos is named after a lagoon, a Portuguese word, Lagos; it's just exquisite. The USIS building was separate from the embassy, the embassy was down on a crescent, which also looked over the lagoon, and we were over on Kings College Road. Now because Lagos has such a bad reputation I thought I would bring this book this morning to share with you on Lagos. It's called EKO, E-K-O, which is the Yoruba word for Lagos. Our officers were at One King's College Road; King's College was a high school.

Q: You are showing us a beautiful colonial style building that you think of eaves that protrude over to keep out the heat and all of that.

ANYASO: It is very well ventilated.

Q: Oh yes.



ANYASO: And our office was just up the street from King's College, we were at number One King's College Road, which was a very good address. The college was there, it was one of the preeminent high schools in Lagos in Nigeria; the Supreme Court was also next door to King's College. One of the things that we were always interested in doing was reaching out to their institutions and building up relationships. So very often I would go over and talk to the students, present books to the school library, get the teachers interested in using our library for research for their students if they are doing research on the United States and then I would hop over to the supreme court and talk to the chief justice and present law books, maybe some law schools in the United States would send us books and we would have these books to present. So this was my introduction to actually being overseas as a cultural affairs officer and I loved it; I was like a kid in a candy shop.

Having come out of the civil rights movement I was very interested in the society and what was going on in the society; I would have been anyway but because of the civil rights movement I had a particular interest in doing this. I think everybody who is anybody has been through Lagos, not just me I'm a peon but high-level people. Secretary Shultz came to visit while I was there and it was his birthday. His wife had baked a cake and so that was really sweet; she had traveled with him. We had named our USIS, US Information Service library after a civil rights leader Whitney Young. So we had the Whitney Young library there.

Q: He drowned didn't he in...

ANYASO: Boy you are a...you must be reading these interviews, he did.

Q: ...swimming off...was it in Nigeria?

ANYASO: It was Bar Beach. The EKO, the Yoruba word for Lagos, hotel was right on this wonderful beach, which is right on the Atlantic Ocean. Well one thing about the Atlantic Ocean is that there are these undercurrents and they are very strong. You are not to swim in the Atlantic Ocean because you drown. Knowing the embassy, I'm sure people must have told him this but nevertheless there is this beautiful water and this beach, they have these little chairs, these thatched coverings to keep out the sun...and you enjoy yourself. Well he decided to go into the water and he got caught in an undertow and he did drown. We named our library after him and his widow came to Nigeria and helped us to open the library. This was done before I got there so this must have been in the late seventies when this was going on; I arrived in '84; so the library there is named after Whitney Young.



The student non-violent coordinating committee, which I had been a member of, SNCC, had a sort of favorite son, his name was Ralph Featherstone and we called him Feather, of course. Ralph Featherstone was too long to say so we called him Feather. After the civil rights movement a lot of people were lost and didn't know what to do with themselves, should you go back to school, should you not, should you go out into the community organizing, should you not? So some of these people were lost lambs and so he started traveling. He ended up in Nigeria and I don't know what happened but I just know that he is buried in Nigeria in the Ikoyi cemetery. There are two islands where most of the expats lived, Ikoyi and Victoria Island. So there is a big cemetery on Ikoyi and he is buried there so that was another link to the civil rights movement.

So here I am in probably the second largest embassy in Africa and I have a great staff. I am the cultural affairs officer, I have two assistant cultural affairs officers, American, and I have a program officer, American, and I have a staff; so there are about 30-40 of us just in the cultural section. I am told by one of my cultural assistants that there is a woman who has been bothering them; she has this relative who was a former slave who came back to Nigeria from the U.S. and she wants to do a program on her relative and this isn't the kind of thing we need to be worried about. So I said, "Okay" and I talked to her. The lady turned out to be Ayo Vaughn-Richards and her relative was a Vaughn who had come from South Carolina as a slave, back to Nigeria, and joined the Baptist missionaries. There are a lot of missionaries who are in Nigeria, in Abeokuta. She wanted to do something to show this link between the United States and Nigeria. One of the things we did was I said, "All rights Mrs. Vaughn- Richards what can we really do?" She said, "I have this Ebony magazine," and Ebony magazine had done this whole spread on her ancestor. I said, "Oh, why don't we take these magazine pictures and get them blown up and make a little exhibit." So we started with Ebony magazine and then she told me that she had a cousin in the United States. I said, "Well, who is your cousin?" She said, "My cousin is Jewell Lafontant." I said, "Jewel Lafontant?" She's the deputy solicitor general of the United States she was a big Republican from Chicago and I don't know whether she had been appointed by Reagan or Bush?

Q: Or for the Reagan administration.



ANYASO: Yes, so he had named this relative of hers to be the deputy solicitor general. I said, "Hey, that's incredible Mrs. Vaughn-Richards, maybe we could get an interview with your relative." So in those days the U.S. Information Agency was great. We had a whole section that made films. So I got in touch with them and I said, "Could you do a video interview with the deputy solicitor general so that we can use it in a program? Jerry Krill was one of the producers and he said, "Sure, we'll do it." He made this beautiful video so we had more. Then she said, "Well you know, I'm related to the first Supreme Court justice of Nigeria whose wife is a part of this family and they have a family bible." I said, "Really?" She said, "I could probably get a collection of those early papers and things and we could make a little exhibit of them. I could have maybe the supreme court justice and his wife come." I said, "Why not?" They did and we are still working on this program and finally brought it together. Well our auditorium in USIS was full; it was packed. She had also brought one of the chiefs from Abeokuta, which is where the Baptist missionaries were where this relative was and we had his story.

Now, there is a Vaughn house, I'm not going to be able to find it but her relative left the Missionaries and became a businessman and owned two shops in Lagos. He had a house and his shop was downstairs, it was called the Vaughn House and I'll find it at some point. At one of his houses he had water, he sold water because Lagos, which is surrounded by lagoons and all this water from the Atlantic Ocean had a water problem. The available water wasn't potable; so he sold water and made a lot of money. We had the history of her relative, we had the Ebony magazine, we had the film, we had the chief and off we went and we had a wonderful Black History Month program in which we were showing relationships between the Nigerians and the Americans and a relationship that had gone back to the very early days when her relative had come back to Nigeria. That was a good thing.

Q: How did you find the Nigerians? We'll come to this in other African countries but responded to the fact that there were Nigerians abroad who are in the United States because sometimes emigrants the people who stayed behind don't look that favorably upon people who have left their country in one way or the other.

ANYASO: I think you're right but no society is monolithic so while there were probably people who felt some kind of animosity about those people who had gone away one of the things we did at USIS was student advising. We counseled students on studying. Where? In the United States. We couldn't keep up with the numbers that was one of our biggest activities so it was prestigious for these Nigerian families to have their kids study in the United States.

Q: Did the kids come back?



ANYASO: Yes and no, mostly no because there had to be job opportunities. Now in the eighties it wasn't difficult and many of them did come back. The economy was good they had found oil in the seventies; they always knew they had oil but it became a big deal. There were cargo ships at the wharfs every day bringing in bags of cement, a lot of building was going on. So a lot of things were going on in Nigeria in the seventies and spilled over into the eighties. It was very prestigious, people were coming back, a lot of the Nigerians who were trained in our universities as professors came back to teach in Nigerian universities because the salaries were competitive; in the eighties they were competitive. So I go over to the University of Lagos and I meet professors who had studied at Columbia, in fact, there was a Columbia mafia. I would meet them, they had studied in Texas, and they were all over the place so this was a good period for Nigerians to return.

Q: I remember talking to a retired Foreign Service officer who has been involved in diplomatic history at the University of North Carolina got himself I think a Fulbright to one of the top universities in Nigeria. He came back with a very negative report saying that the students weren't serious and that there were strikes all the time and there wasn't much teaching. The universities are run down because nobody was disciplining the students.

ANYASO: Universities were quite good in the sixties that's when they were getting started. Michigan State helped start the University of Nigeria in the Eastern part of the country. The first vice chancellor is what they called their presidents at these universities. The first vice chancellor at the University of Nigeria was from Michigan State and they had a big, big role in that. Nigerians had started their premier university which was the University of Ibadan and they took a graduating class from Yaba College of Technology made it the first class in this Ibadan University. They had a very big linkage program with the University of Pennsylvania, not Penn State, the University of Pennsylvania. The University of Lagos also had connections with U.S. universities as did the University of IFE and you're right, we would put professors at all of these universities. Things began to slide I would say I was there '84-'88, late '80s and '90s things are beginning to go bad in terms of the economy; they weren't keeping up support for the universities. Universities are not private they are funded by the government so the government was not providing the budgets that they used to provide. So they were becoming run down and the security of these universities because of this crime situation you are talking about wasn't very good. We had our concerns about where we were placing our Fulbrighters both the students and the professors because we wanted to make sure that they were safe and that they were having a good experience. One of the things we always advised them to do was yes you are coming out as a lecturer, yes you will be lecturing and teaching in these universities, have a research project in your pocket, have something else you can be doing because we never know, as you say, when there are going to be strikes.



When I arrived in Nigeria this whole drug problem, the Nigerians who were carrying drugs being mules, to get the drugs into Europe and into the United States this was a real serious problem. We had all kinds of restrictions against Nigerians traveling too because they were carrying drugs. The other problem we were having was that maybe it's a spill over from the sixties but there were a lot of American women, it became trendy to wear your hair in braids, wear dashiki's, relate to Africa, go back to your roots and many of them had married some of the Nigerian students, as had I, and gone back to Nigeria to live and things were not going well.

Q: Certainly in the Middle East we've had horrible problems with women marrying Middle Eastern students.

ANYASO: Exactly and things were not going well. These women wanted to leave, they had children many of them and they not only wanted to leave but they wanted to take their children. The law in Nigeria is unequivocal about who these children belong to and who will get custody of these children; the father will, the father's family will, you will not take these children. So they were trying to sneak their kids across the border into other countries and get them back to the States. I think our consulate had a very liberal policy we tried to help them as much as we could to get them and the kids back to the United States; that tapered off after a while but for awhile there it was just crazy.

Culturally speaking I talked to some students a couple weeks ago about cross-cultural communication, cultural shock and things like that. Culture shock is very real, you see the graph it's way up here and you are excited and you are there and it's wonderful. It's a new experience, new adventures and then gradually you go down into this trough and you are very depressed and very unhappy and then you start going back up again. Well this had to happen to these women. I mean this happened to us as Foreign Service officers but we had a little cocoon, we were living on compounds. We were in the American community, we maintained our traditions we had turkey for Thanksgiving, trees for Christmas. These ladies lived on the local economy and in these families; these were extended families and they weren't used to people descending upon them at all hours of the day and night and so many of them. After a while it became very difficult for them to cope.

Q: Not just on the Islamic side but other places were there multiple wives or at least a good girlfriend or something sort of officially I mean mistresses or something? Was this the tradition over there?



ANYASO: There was polygamy especially strong as I say among the Yoruba and we were in Lagos so we were surrounded by Yorba communities and the Yoruba people; so that was another thing that one had to cope with. Additional wives, they had children, you had children and there has to be a pecking order you know whose child is on first; and there was that. I discovered Lagos, as I say, is the closest thing to New York that I can think of in Africa. Forget Pretoria and other parts of Africa where you think oh yes it's pretty groovy, it's nice. Lagos is the closest thing to New York that I can recall in Africa so there is this organization called Niger Wives, you've probably heard about this in your other interviews. Well this organization consisted of wives who were married to Nigerians and this was their little support network. They could get-together and talk about the problems they were having and help each other out. I discovered at that time that this Niger Wives organization had about 364 members from everywhere Russia, China, Yugoslavia, the United States, of course, Latin America; the Nigerians are very catholic they marry from everywhere. They don't care. There are all these women in this organization who are doing nice things. They had bazaars, they raised money for the communities, you know how we do things. They were very active, Doris Dada who was an American woman out there married to a Nigerian minister and Doris was sort of the dean or the doyen of the Niger Wives and she was very good. One of the wives was from New Zealand; she was a professor at the university and had done a lot of research about Nigerian women's political activity so I got involved with the Niger Wives. I told them I could not join because I was a representative of the U.S. government and I didn't join, I could help organizations. I wanted to be available to everybody I didn't want to limit myself to just one organization so I maintained that I couldn't join but I got their newsletter and I supported their activities. They had children and they were eligible to use our libraries, and to be counseled; in fact, our foreign student advisor was an American woman married to a Nigerian who was a professor at the university. She was doing our student counseling so we got involved with them and as I say we helped them as much as possible.

But in the eighties it was a very interesting situation. We had become complacent and uninteresting, we had become boring as a cultural center so one of the first things I wanted to do was to reenergize this cultural center. As I say, I started with the Vaughn family and then since I knew them they were having trouble with this Martin Luther King birthday celebration in the United States; they were trying to make it a national holiday, it wasn't at the time but they were lobbying for it. We would celebrate it; we would celebrate the Martin Luther King birthday in a small way so I started celebrating the Martin Luther King birthday. I was in one of the embassy cars one day and I went past this church in Lagos. There are lots of churches Episcopal, Catholic, Mosques, everything was there but there was a Baptist Church. Now this Vaughn family where the relative had been with the Baptist missionaries had also been involved with this church in Lagos so I saw this church, it was Baptist and it said Ebenezer and I said, "bingo."

Q: Ebenezer Church in Atlanta.



ANYASO: Martin Luther King's church in Atlanta is the Ebenezer Baptist Church, what is this church doing in Lagos? So I called my friend Ayo Vaughn-Richards; at this point we had become bosom buddies. I said, "Ayo I saw this church with this sign. Do you know anything about it?" She said, "That's my church." I said, "Oh, we are going to have a Martin Luther King program at that church, you have to talk to the minister." She did, we did. We had a video, I forget whoever the secretary of state was or the president we did a video with them so that they could say something nice about Martin Luther King's birthday. At this point, Ambassador Smith had been very ill and left so Princeton Lyman was the ambassador. Ambassador Lyman came and he read in the service and we had talked to the choir there and they did some American spirituals as well as Yoruba songs in the service; this was wonderful. We read the Martin Luther King I Have A Dream Speech and then we had the commercial or agriculture officer sing, his name was Johnny Brown. He was one of these big, tall African-Americans you know but he could sing like a lark. I said, "Johnny could you come sing on our program?" and he said, "Yes." I said, "Can you come and can you sing If I Can Help Somebody?" That was Martin Luther King's favorite song and he said, "Sure." Johnny came and he stood up and he opened his mouth and he started singing and he brought down the house. It was just great so we were on a roll here; we were getting our cultural program going. I had never been a cultural officer so I didn't know any better, I just did what seemed reasonable and this seemed very reasonable. So we had it going and going and going. The agency sent out art shows and we had art exhibits but Nigerians have some of the best artists in the world.

Q: Oh yes.

ANYASO: They do and they have now generations of them. I think they are on their fourth generation but I was there during the second generation or the first generation. This very famous Nigerian artist because I've always said we can't just do our thing we have to do something that we can show together. So Bruce Onobrakpeya, one of their famous artists, more of a graphic artist than a painter and from the Midwest, he was Urhobo or one of the minority groups. Bruce did an excellent, excellent show for us. I said, "Okay, you studied in the United States somebody studied in the United States so that's our hook." We did a show and it was great, wonderful.



Then there was a photographer Sunmi Smart-Cole who was the photographer for the Guardian Newspaper but he was a freelancer and he had studied photography in California. So I said, "Ach, Sunmi why don't we do a photography show and show your prints and we did that; it was packed, he brought the foreign minister. On the side Sunmi also cut hair, he was a barber. So he cut the hair of the foreign minister, he whispered in his ear that he was having this show and why don't you come to my show; so the foreign minister comes and said a few words. Sunmi had magnificent photographs and it went on and on and on so we really built up the American cultural center; I think we were on par with the French cultural center. The Italians at that point had a cultural center, of course, there was the British Council and while I was there Maggie Thatcher came out with her husband Dennis walking ten paces behind. They opened a new British Council building and we all went because we were actually a community; you did your thing and they did their thing but when it came down to it we all helped each other. So we all went to open the British Council, which is a wonderful facility.

Under President Reagan we had a director of USIA by the name of Charles Wick and Mr. Wick liked to play the piano. He felt he was very good at this; actually he could just play Happy Birthday sort of like Richard Nixon. But anyway he had it in his head this is good music and under Charlie I had one thing I was really very upset with him about but there was one thing on the music side I was very happy about. He started a competition for young American pianists all over the United States. We had these competitions and get the best ones regionally and then they would have a national competition and we would send them overseas to have concerts. So I said, "Yep, got to do that, got to bring one of those people to Nigeria to help beef up our cultural program." They sent out some wonderful young men, they had a Metropolitan Club, which is one of the local clubs and they used to have musical programs. So we had our musician play on that program. I think we had Michael Caldwell, we had another young man come out but we would always go to the Metropolitan Club and I always took them outside to the universities so that the students could hear them and see them; these are young people like them.

Remember, I think we had Philip Hosford and Philip was tall and had a moustache, looked great in a tuxedo, a dream of a pianist. So we had these posters done up with Philip and his moustache in his tuxedo, we plastered the campus at the University of Lagos with the posters. Come the night of the concert and I am driving along on the campus and I look around for our posters and they are gone. I asked my assistant, "Did you put posters up here?" "Yes ma'am." I said, "Well why don't we see the posters?" "I don't know." Well it turns out that Nigerians like Moustaches, you'd be great, and Philip had this moustache and they were treating him like he was some kind of rock star and they took all the posters and they were in their rooms; that's where they were. So I could consider that a success because we had lots of interest in this. They had, it wasn't a Steinway piano, it was one of those German pianos but they hadn't tuned it in ages and it was hard to find piano tuners; it was just miserable. He would get to the upper register of the piano but we'd hear this horrible grating sound but he got through it; he was devastated inside but he got thorough it. So I said, "Philip, we are going to take you to Eastern Nigeria, why do everything in the capital city, let's go out."



I don't know if many of the people over there ever heard classical music but there was an American over there working with a dance group, he was a choreographer so he was over there and working with the cultural center and here we come with this pianist.

Q: Where was over there?

ANYASO: Over there is in Owerri, which is the capital of Imo state now in the East. My husband's people...I'll get into the politics a little later but Nigeria is under military rule so there's a military governor. He had been invited and he came; he was a Navy guy so he was all in whites. We had a full audience, they had found people I don't know where and they came and they listened but they didn't know when to clap. So we said, "Okay, Philip when you finish you bow your head so they know you are finished and then they can clap." We had it all arranged and he did, he would finish a piece and he would bow his head and then they would clap; I thought okay we've brought culture to this area. So afterwards people came up and shook his hand and he was really very good, he was a good guy. This one man who had been in the audience came up and he shook his head and I said, "Did you enjoy the concert?" He said, "Yes, but he didn't play Brahms." I said, "Oh?" He said, "Yes." He had studied in the United States and he knew classical music; he had really enjoyed it but he was waiting for Brahms and there was no Brahms. I said, "Well next time we will you have him play some Brahms." So that was one of my experiences; I had a great time this first year.

Q: Well tell me here you are in Lagos.

ANYASO: Yes.

Q: And you've got this vast hinterland where the Hausa are and they are Muslim and it's quite a different culture. How could we penetrate that society culture wise?

ANYASO: Okay, well I'm in '84, '85, '86, '87' and '88. One of the stereotypes about Nigeria is that all the Muslims are living in the hinterland in the North is not true. A lot of the Yoruba are Muslim so yes, they have mosques, there are several in my book. There are Mosques there because a lot of them, fifty percent or more, are Muslim. Islam came from Saudi Arabia into Sudan and went across I don't know where your map of Africa is...

Q: It's behind you.

ANYASO: Oh there.



Q: Through Chad and sometimes...

ANYASO: Yeah, this whole Sahelian region below the Sahara, Sudan, Chad, Niger, Mali, Mauritania came from Saudi Arabia and over like that. Well there was also another strand of Islam that was typically African and spread along the coast; it came along the coast into the western part of Nigeria. There was a Catholic priest, Father Ryan, who explained this to me at one point because I didn't know that these people were there and they were Muslim, I knew they were Muslim but I didn't know there was a different form of Islam from that in the North. So there is that culture already there and we are already interacting with them.

The Yoruba are probably one of the strongest cultures I've ever encountered; they are very proud, very arrogant about their culture. They can be sitting in a room like this and you speak English and you don't speak Yoruba, they don't care they are going to speak to each other in Yoruba. I remember we were interviewing for one of our grants and I had my selection committee and they started speaking Yoruba, I said fine, okay. They have Oba's; they have O-B-A's who are kings and there is an Oba of Lagos who is very important. As I say, some of it is traditional and some it is Muslim and how do you penetrate that culture; that has to be my next story when I come back to Nigeria and I go North and I talk about how we try to do that.

Q: Nigeria has left a pretty negative impression in the United States because of confidence people through the Internet, counterfeit...I had a friend who was a banker in Baltimore your place, John Howard Eager and he was a classmate of mine in the Howard's and all that area. He was saying that it was an expression saying if somebody came in to the bank identified as a Nigerian all the tellers were to close their windows and sit back and regroup because they thought the Nigerians could out think them, outsmart the bankers as far as how to illegally extract money. Did you run across both this manifestation from how it was portrayed in the United States and also was it being done to you?

ANYASO: In the community? Yes, we had to be very protective of our personal documents, we had shredders at the office but you kept your checks locked up, any of your account numbers you kept locked up. You could not use credit cards in Nigeria anywhere; not in hotels not anywhere because once they got that number you were wiped out and this still is the case. Lagos has a bad reputation, Nigerians have a bad reputation and it's probably merited but it's not all Nigerians.

Q: Of course not, but...



ANYASO: One of our good friends was a big lawyer in Nigeria and he had been the minister of information in the first Nigerian Republic T-O-S Benson and TOS was always very upset because here are very respectable, well dressed, well spoken people who behaved like any other people and whenever they traveled they were treated so miserably by the customs officials by everybody as though they were these Nigerian crooks. This was very, very humiliating for them.

Q: I'm sure it was but the reputation wasn't just prejudice there was a real...

ANYASO: No, it has nothing to do with politics.

Q: ...and today on the Internet I mean one of the jokes is...

ANYASO: 419, which is the Nigerian code 419, which has to do with these financial scams. So we call them 419ers. Our consulate has produced a booklet so that we can give it to people who are traveling, our tourists, our business people so that they can be careful. People are so innocent and they keep falling into these things.

Q: Well you have to remember most people are amateurs in dealing with fraud and we are up against professional frauders.

ANYASO: Clever and they make it seem so real. They send you this letter with letter head from the central bank and they talk about this money they can't get out.

Q: Yes.

ANYASO: And if you would send them money then you could help them get out millions and then you would take half of the money; people fall for that. It's not only Americans. I was talking to the British ambassador and they figured \$5 billion just for them. The Germans were involved; we were involved this is so clever. If we could only turn this...

Q: It's really an attribute of the Nigerians as they are smarter than most other people.



ANYASO: But if we could turn it into something productive and legal you know...part of the problem, of course, is the economy the way it is structured. The Country Director of the World Bank tried to explain it to me. It is like a desert economy, like you have a sheik or something and he's got all the resources one person or just a small group of people and that is basically how their economy works. So what are all these other people supposed to do? That's a part of it.

Q: Well let's talk a bit about when you got to this '84-'88 period about the government in Nigeria and how the embassy worked within this framework.

ANYASO: When I got there in '84 they had this wonderful moment of elected government and Democratic rule was going to be returning to Nigeria. Shehu Shagari was the president and one of my husband's friends was one of his very close advisers in this government. By the time I got there the government was gone; it had been overthrown by Buhari, military, General Buhari. Nigerians always promoted themselves (unlike the Ghanaians, Rawlings always kept his rank as Flight Lieutenant). Once they had a coup then they became general whatever. So you had Buhari and Idi Obong and this was a military government, which was very, puritanical. They wanted to clean everything up and they wanted to follow all the rules and it was pretty harsh.

Now our offices are on One King's College Road and the ministry of defense is on an angle to our building. So these military officers are coming out in their convoys all the time and they are not nice people. You are to get out of the way and if you don't get out of the way you will be run over. Unfortunately, there were tourists, I remember there was a German woman tourist who was shot; you get out of the way when you see these things coming.

We laugh now about our politicians here being on message. They come on CNN or Fox and they are always on message; they've got their talking points. You talk about Nigerians being smart. This government had everybody on talking points; they were on message and they did not like the United States; they were very open about it and very rude about it, everybody was on message. So I visit the University of Lagos, this is a liberal arts institution, and I'm meeting with faculty there and the dean of this particular medical faculty stands up and gives this speech, this tirade against the United States; this is how they wanted to start every meeting. They would get up and deliver a tirade against the United States. So that wasn't very pleasant and it happened all the time.



However, they didn't ostracize us. They would work with us but in their own way. When we had American speakers, we took them to universities, we scheduled them in our cultural center, or we took them to meetings with other organizations. At one time, we had invited a speaker who was going to talk about the U.S. economy and we co-sponsored the program with the Nigerian Economic Association. Remember, this is during the Cold War and the Nigerians didn't want it to appear that they were leaning toward the U.S. so they invited the Russians to join us in this. So we had somebody from the Russian embassy on the panel and then there was a professor from the University of Calabar, I think, which is all the way over in the East who is a Marxist and they invited him to come and be on my program. I was livid, but what could I do. I couldn't disinvite them since they were our partners. They had a right to select people but it was very uncomfortable for me anyway, but it was a very interesting discussion. You would have the different points of view and all of that. So we went through that period with them.

One of the speakers I programmed was Herman Cohen who at the time...

Q: Hank Cohen.

ANYASO: Yes, Hank Cohen who was assistant secretary...

Q: For African affairs.

ANYASO: He was assistant secretary later on but at the time he was Ambassador to Senegal. He wanted to do some traveling and so since he was coming we figured we'd use him as a speaker. Nigeria has this wonderful organization, the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs; it's sort of like Brookings. They have researchers on staff and many of them are American trained and they have an auditorium and they have people from all over the world speaking there. So we said we have this ambassador from Senegal, Would you program him here at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs and they said yes; he's a wonderful speaker. He didn't get easy questions but he was very adroit in answering.

Q: Were we in competition with the Soviets at the time or were the Nigerians going their own way?



ANYASO: We were in competition. It wasn't like earlier in the '60s but it was still there, they were a super powers still, we were a super power. The Nigerians didn't want to side with either of us. They wanted to be independent of both of us and so they weren't going to be nice to either of us. They made sure that if they did something with them we were involved, if they did something with us they were involved because they didn't want to be seen as favoring one side or the other. This was also the time, I forget what had happened, this must have been early on because Kissinger wanted to come out for a visit to Africa and they told him no because they felt very independent. The other thing the Nigerians were involved with was apartheid and getting rid of apartheid in South African. They were the African country that carried the anti-apartheid movement in Africa; they got others and beat them over the head and got them involved in this. But they put up the money and they were always out there talking about it and they were the ones who came up with the boycott of South African sports. Secretary Kissinger was going to come out, no, we are not going to meet with Secretary Kissinger and they didn't. Yes, this was Nigerians being Nigerians; they wanted to be independent of our politics especially this particular regime. Plus they didn't like our Africa policy towards southern Africa, South Africa and Angola.

Q: This particular regime was there during this four-year period?

ANYASO: They were in the seat when I got there and making things very unpleasant. I mean it was under this regime that they said we are Nigerians, we should look like Nigerians and women shouldn't be wearing pants and they should be wearing traditional dress. Nigerian women weren't going to stand for that. There was a governor in my husband's part of the country who told all the civil servants, all the women, no more pants. They must wear traditional dress. Even women who didn't wear pants got pants and they went to work the next day and they said, "Look, we are wearing pants. When you take off that western military uniform and wear traditional dress we will too, but we are wearing our own clothes and what we want to wear." It did not last but this was some of the thinking that this particular group came up with. They were relatively honest and they were trying to get rid of corruption. They were also going into the ministries at seven o'clock or eight o'clock or whenever it was that you were supposed to be at your desk and if you weren't at your desk you got fired; so they were just doing all kinds of things.

Q: Would you say that the cultural side was one of the few places we could make some points in Nigeria at the time?



ANYASO: Yes I would say that. We felt we were neutral they sort of understood that culture was not really well they knew it was sort of political but it was less political than the rest of it. So we were able to have our programs. At one point they called us to task on the Fulbright Program because they wanted to have a say in who got selected and we told them that is not the way that it worked; it was a selection by peers, Nigerian academics would help us to select but not them. So they let us get away with that so it wasn't all bad.

Q: At the embassy did you have the feeling that all of you were kind of marking time until they got rid of this I mean that they'd return to a Democratic non-military government? Was that the feeling?

ANYASO: After the first coup, which was in '66 they had about 36 years of military government in Nigeria so it was a long slog. We weren't marking time; we did have access. It was just that we had to hear these speeches before we could really get down to business. At that time, I presented a lot of sports programs. They liked sports, they had a good sports federation, we did lots of sports programming even with the military. Our political section had access to the military and they were very chummy with one of the military officers by the name of Babangida. I don't think he was a general at that point but he was articulate, he's smart, he came to a wedding. I think one of the military attaches got married to one of the American secretaries. He came to the wedding at the ambassador's residence and so we knew the military officers and what they were doing. In 1985 when my parents had finally, finally gotten passports and decided they were going to come and visit me there was a coup. Babangida and some of his cohorts had staged a coup and my parents decided this was not the time to visit Nigeria. They were sort of nervous and I didn't want to pressure them I figured they would be okay; I wasn't afraid of being there but they were different. So Babangida became the next military leader and we had wonderful access. We had high hopes for him and what he could do for Nigeria and in those early days he was pretty good; Nigerian national day is October the first, this Friday is October first?

Q: Thursday.

ANYASO: Is it Thursday?

Q: I'm not sure.



ANYASO: Yes, well that is Nigerian National Day. The first national day after the coup, which had been in July or August he decided he wanted to have a parade on national day and it rained on his parade, buckets. There you have this handsome military officer on a white horse in this pouring rain; I will never forget it. He just looked like he was the next savior of Nigeria. Well he wasn't. He became probably one of the most corrupt military dictators that the country has had and that was unfortunate.

Q: Oil wealth had really started to come in by his time hadn't it?

ANYASO: Yes, oil wealth dominated the seventies; that's when they had all these ships bringing in cement for all the building. Everybody had his own private plane; the Nigerians bought all these private planes and had executive jets. They were flying British Airways into London over the weekend for shopping sprees. Starting in the seventies the money was tapering off but the few people in power had access to what money there was. A barrel of oil in those days it wasn't like now it's \$12-\$15 I think it went up to \$20 something but \$12-\$15 primarily back in the eighties. But psychologically, two things had happened to Nigerians. The Nigerian Biafran war had left a big, big wound in that society and the values in that society. The next thing was this oil what they called the curse of oil because they let everything go. They had cocoa plants, they stopped tending the trees, they weren't exporting cocoa, and agriculture just died. They started importing a lot of their foodstuffs, they weren't growing it anymore so it became a one product economy and that has been the kiss of death.

Q: It's the curse of oil and so often here is a very rich country, which is not going anywhere.

ANYASO: Eighty-five percent of the budget is from the oil; without oil they would collapse.

Q: How was Lagos at the time living there?



ANYASO: You know I think that the public diplomacy people see the best of society. I wasn't getting people out of jail, I wasn't doing consular work, all those visa lines which became...the three biggest visa operations in the U.S. government overseas is Manila, Lagos and Mexico City and that's it; lines of people, lines and lines and lines of people. I didn't deal with that I dealt with academics, journalists, and cultural types like actors. The only repertory theater in Africa, at least in West Africa, was in Lagos. J.P. Clarke who had been trained at Princeton ran it; we had an American teaching at the University of IFE who was teaching theater and he was involved with Wole Soyinka and presenting plays; Soyinka's plays and things like that. So I'm into the plays, I'm into the writers, I'm into the artists, I'm into the students, I'm into the professors so I'm having a good time and I'm thinking this is the best place to be; now I will still say that. I served in Abuja and people said, "Well how is Abuja?" I thought, no, Abuja is not like this, there is no energy here, there is nothing happening here everything happens in Lagos. It was wonderful. They had Jazz clubs, Jazz 38; we were friendly with them and we'd go to the club. They would have jazz night at the museum; all the people in culture were having a good time.

The British Council person said to me, "You know Claudia, this is the best kept secret in the world." Nobody realized we were having such a good time and you can have a good time. You meet so many wonderful people, judges and lawyers. In USIS whenever people didn't know what to do with something they would say why don't you call those people in USIS and see if they can help; we got all the overflow. There was an AID contractor's husband who came out with her. We had child and maternal health programs; the one thing about oil countries is you can't have an aid program in an oil country because they have too much money, right? Most of the people don't have it but we don't give U.S. aid so it was a regional aid program and they had a couple of people in Nigeria. So they were doing child and maternal health programs, anyway somebody was coming out to do that and her husband was an astrophysicist. He volunteered and offered himself as a lecturer and I thought it was a non-starter. Who are you going to find to listen to this guy? Why are you calling me? Calm down, why don't you see what you can do. He's coming anyway. I said, "Well if I'm going to have an astrophysicist I'm going to find something for him to do." So I called the University of Lagos sort of you know I've already decided this will never work. I said, "You know, I have Professor so and so from the University of Texas or wherever he was from and he's an astrophysicist and he wants to come and talk to your students about greenhouse gasses." The professor said, "Yes, send him over, what did you say his name was again?" He took his name down "And what's his last name?" and took that down. "Oh, yes some of our guys had worked there and we know these people." They had the best time. Whatever you wanted to do you could find a Nigerian who knew something about it and wanted to help you do it. So I had a great time. In fact, I had such a good time and fashion, ah fashion, fabric, fashion, wow. They had tremendous fashion shows. Of course, I was a judge at these fashion shows.



So I said this Foreign Service isn't all bad, it's pretty good so I decided that I would apply to join the Foreign Service after this Excursion Tour; now you had to do the oral exam and the in-box and all of that. I came home one summer and I did that and went back and they selected me. Nigeria was my first overseas tour but I was on an Excursion Tour so my first real assignment as a Foreign Service officer was in Haiti; I had to get my French requirement out of the way. I had my bid list and I had all these wonderful places at the top and I had Haiti at the bottom. So I got a call at home one night; they don't do this they call you during working hours, at home at night. I knew something was going on, I knew something was wrong I was suspicious. "Hello, Mrs. Anyaso? Great news for you." "Yes?" "We are so delighted to tell you that you are going to Haiti." I said, "What? What about all those other countries?" "Well, Haiti was on your list and we need people to go to Haiti." And so that is how I went to my next assignment, Port-Au-Prince.

Q: Okay, well we will pick this up in what 1989?

ANYASO: '88.

Q: In '88 you are off to Haiti and we will pick this up the next time there.

ANYASO: All right.

Q: Yes.

Q: Today is the 9th of October 2009 with Claudia Anyaso. Claudia, you are off to Haiti did you take Creole or French or something?

ANYASO: I took French because I felt I could use that language in many more places, Creole is somewhat limited although they told me that they speak a kind of Creole in Mauritius but I took French.

Q: Creole is a French word for mixture or something like that.

ANYASO: Exactly.

Q: Okay, what was your job?



ANYASO: I had been cultural affairs officer in Nigeria and I was also cultural affairs officer in Haiti.

Q: Let's get the date. You were there from when to when?

ANYASO: I got there, I think, in the fall of 1988 and I left in the summer of '90. I had a health problem and I left sooner than I had expected.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you got there?

ANYASO: When I was in Haiti the ambassador was Brunson McKinley. A rather interesting character and then I'm trying to remember. Before I left there was a new ambassador and I can't recall his name.

Q: Now tell me why Brunson McKinley was interesting.

ANYASO: Well you know there is a certain type-casting or stereotyping in the Foreign Service. Ambassadors are thought to be graduates from ivy league schools and they have the rimless glasses and blah, blah, blah. WASPs (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) that is the stereotypical Foreign Service officer and he looked just like that. He was also a very knowledgeable person and he felt that he knew everything. Whatever your job was he knew it better and I really hadn't run into very many people like that at that time; I did later but at that time it was new to me. So it was sometimes hard to recommend things to him because he felt that he knew what was going on and he knew better. So I think, I know we had a bit of a run in over a cultural program. I think we were going to do a Martin Luther King program and I had some suggestions to make and he wasn't sure that these things would work. I said, "Why don't we give it a chance, let's see if it can work." They had two schools that the American kids in Haiti went to. One was the Union School which most of the diplomatic kids went to and one was a missionary school. So I got kids from the American school, the diplomatic school, and some from the other school to do a candlelight march onto the stage; they had little poems and readings to do. Then I had found an actor who was running a drug education program but anyway he was really an actor and I had him read the I Have A Dream speech. Anyway we had a very nice, it was small but very nice program. So he came to me afterwards and he said, "Well, you know, that really worked out just great." I said, "Yes, sir, Mr. Ambassador it really did thanks for all your help. But I really do know what I am doing." We got along fine after that, he just sort of got out of my lane, did the things he was supposed to be doing and let me run the cultural program.

Q: Okay, well let's take when you got there in '88 how would you describe the situation in Haiti?



ANYASO: '88 was a good window of time for our relationship. Baby Doc had just left and Papa Doc Duvalier had been a pariah for the American government and so was his son and deservedly so. They ruined the country, they sold everything that wasn't nailed down and if you visited the presidential palace it was totally empty. They had sold the railroad tracks to the Japanese for scrap metal, I mean it was just devastated; however, he left and that was a good thing. So the political situation was a bit influx with various candidates. Marc Bazin was one. I think Marc had either worked for the UN or World Health Organization or something and there were some other candidates. I think we were sort of leaning toward Marc because he seemed to be a very good guy. The generals were still around and in the barracks and still pretty much in charge behind the scenes. I'm a little hazy at this point but at some point they stepped in again so General Avril was running things for the first year or so that I was there.

Before I left, Ertha Trouillot, the first woman president of Haiti who had been a Supreme Court justice, was appointed president. Anyway, she became the president, they worked it all out and, in fact, one of our junior officers, Hoyt Lee, escorted General Avril to the airport, put him on the plane with his little poodle and off he went so the decks were clear. We felt that a new government era was in store for Haiti. There was a priest in Cite Soleil, which was a large slum in Haiti, Aristide; he was still a priest at that point who was working in the slums with young men and then slum dwellers and that kind of thing. However, he would go out of the country from time to time and make these very vitriolic anti-American speeches in Miami. I was never a fan of Aristide and I was shocked later on when he had been elected president and then I think he was thrown out and we, the U.S. government, helped to reinstall him because he had been democratically elected; sometimes even though it's a democratic election it's the wrong guy and I think he was always the wrong guy. Anyway, things were not as polarized when I was there as they had been before and so we had freedom of movement, we could move around, we could do things. The Ton Ton Macoutes, the Duvalier guards...

Q: These were the guys with the dark glasses who went around and they were bullies.



ANYASO: They were bullies and they threatened people and it was a terrible, terrible atmosphere when they were around; well they had gone away, they had sort of disappeared at that time. Economically we were hopeful for the economy of Haiti, they were still making the baseballs, and they made all the baseballs for all of our professional teams in the United States; that was a good business. The rum business was always good, Bacardi Rum; but there were a number of assembly line operations that had come down because Haiti is only about two hours from the United States by plane, by air. So it was close, you didn't have to ship things long distances, it was an ideal place to have light industry businesses. They started making beachwear and some other things. I think they might have even been assembling some cars; I wasn't the econ officer so I'm not quite sure of everything but it was hopeful. AID was there with their program and it was good. I thought culturally we had good programs for our exchanges, our IVs our International Visitors, our Fulbrighters, and we even had Humphrey people.

What I wanted to do more than anything else was to build up the speaker program when I was there because there was this fear when coming to Haiti that I wanted to get speakers down there to talk to the Haitians and get over this hump. So we did have quite a few speakers. Interestingly enough one of my first speakers was a Haitian American woman who was in social work but she had come down to talk about drug awareness. I believe her father, at one point, had been one of those quick presidents of Haiti, Hippolyte; sometimes you could be president for a month so I think her father had been one of those quick presidents of Haiti, they never quite got the leadership part right. Anyway, they have lovely museums; they had a couple of wonderful museums in Haiti. One was at the Place des Heroes, it was just for paintings and things like that and then they had the Museum of Haitian Art.

Q: That's really I mean that is really something.

ANYASO: Beautiful art, beautiful art and very popular in the United States; we had lots of tourists and visitors. The other thing that had happened to Haiti under the Duvaliers was that the tourist industry had fallen off tremendously; some of it was coming back but it just wasn't the same thing. They used to have cruise ships that would come and they would dock at Cap-Haitien in the north as a part of their tour of the Caribbean and those had stopped. They had one of the French...

Q: Club Mediterranean?



ANYASO: Yes, Club Med. They had one of those and that had closed so it was a little bit rocky but we were hopeful that things were going to get better. I worked with the university, there is one university there, I finally after many phone calls and cables I got a professor from one of the Florida universities to come down. He was supposed to be starting a linkage with the Haitian university and it had sort of been dropped so we got that reestablished. Haitian kids needed something to do and they had a sports commission there so we worked and I got a couple coaches to come down and help to coach the kids in basketball; so we got some things going again. It was a good program.

They have probably one of the best music schools in the Caribbean, in Latin America, basically run by some Episcopal nuns. The church was Sainte Trinite. And so when I had people I was looking for Fulbrighters maybe in music we had had a former Fulbrighter who had gone to Julliard and they went to that school. So I went over to talk to the nuns who were quite busy because every day when the planes came in from the States there were a lot of Americans who wanted to be helpful and they just come down to help. So this was a good thing but anyway I just went over to talk to the nuns and I said, "You know we are going to have our Black History Month program in Haiti, of course, Toussaint L'Overture but just the whole history of Haiti had been remarkable for its time so I figured there was a link there that we could have." They were quite nice and they said we could use their auditorium and I had been traveling around to various parts of the country; it's not very big it's half of an island you know. I had been traveling around and I heard this marvelous group, which had been in Les Cayes which is down south. I thought, oh yes, we need this group for our program. Then there were groups in Port-Au-Prince who knew we were doing something and my husband was working in a law office, he was consulting. One of the girls in his law office belonged to a gospel group and I said, "Sure come and bring Bernadette and her group." So we had them. I don't know whether you know that Katherine Dunham, the famous dancer...

Q: The famous dancer oh yes.

ANYASO: African American dancer.

Q: On the school of...

ANYASO: Of modern dance and hers was more...

Q: It was modern dance and talking about Martha Graham...

ANYASO: ...Martha Graham.



Q: ...of that ilk.

ANYASO: It was of that generation, it was that ilk, hers was more ethnic dancing; Martha Graham's was a little bit different but anyway they had all started together. Pearl Primus was another one and interestingly enough I think that she decided to make Haiti her home because a lot of the dancers in New York, certainly the Black dancers were Haitian Americans; fabulous dancers, fabulous singers but great dancers. So she had a home there and I started visiting her. It was a wonderful home and they call plantations in Haiti "habitaciones", habitacion, and so this particular habitacion had belonged to Napoleon's son-in-law who is actually buried in Haiti.

Q: Le Clerc or something.

ANYASO: Le Clerc, yes, exactly. So this was wonderful, very historic, very cultural and she knew everybody so she was a resource for me; she lived there. We were able to bring her to some of our programs. At that point she was not very mobile, she was not very well, she was in her eighties but a fascinating woman. She had become a mambo, which is a voodoo priestess and so she had really gotten into the culture. It turns out she had done a lot of anthropological research in the Caribbean, Haiti, Jamaica, maybe Cuba but I know Jamaica and Haiti and had written about eight books on the cultures and the people in that area; she really was a great resource.

She was one resource and there was another American woman from Chicago whose name was Eileen Bazin who incidentally was married to Marc Bazin's, the politician's, brother. Anyway, I became friendly with Eileen who had a dance studio in Haiti and she had marvelous students; she taught them a certain technique of dance but she loved Alvin Ailey.

Q: It was the preeminent African-American ballet...

ANYASO: African-American Ballet Company in which the U.S. Information Agency had sponsored overseas many times to the Soviet Union. I think we were responsible for it being the Alvin Ailey American Ballet Company certainly for the overseas audiences. Anyway she loved Alvin Ailey and she had taught her kids some of his famous dances so I said, "Oh, I'm having this program Eileen do you think you could get the kids ready for the program?" She did and they were magnificent.



There was another American woman who was up in Petionville. Petion was a very famous Haitian general so they named this neighborhood after him. Most of the wonderful hotels and ex-pats lived up there in Petionville. Anyway she had her jazz tap studio there and I couldn't very well invite Eileen without inviting her competition. I can't remember her name at the moment but I went up and I invited her and her kids to also do a number, too, on the show.

There was a fourth American women there who was also in dance, I really mean this sincerely that if it's dance it should be Haiti.

Q: I was just wondering I've interviewed I can't think of her name now but she was an African-American who worked on the Hill and she took ballet but it was hard for African-American women for the most part because of the configuration, a little too big of bust, a little too big of behind. But when you think of Haitians you think of rather slim people. I was just wondering...

ANYASO: It's true.

Q: ...would you say this was a factor?

ANYASO: I don't know that that was a factor I just know that they tended to be very successful and I'm not sure that the African-American's thought that those were traits that were detrimental or limiting in terms of ballet.

Q: This is actually probably a specific kind anyway you get all sorts of people.

ANYASO: Exactly. Now Lavinia Williams was also in that same age group with Martha and Katherine and she had a dance studio and she taught ethnic dancing and she also had a program on Haitian television. So I was very good friends with Lavinia, I didn't have her and her kids on the program but we became good friends. It turns out that her youngest daughter was a ballerina and was the lead ballerina for the Atlanta ballet, all this dance. So on the night of the program I had about 700 people, with all these groups for this program. The one thing I don't do is and maybe it is because of my Meyers-Briggs type I don't rehearse people.

Q: You might explain what a Meyers-Briggs type is.



ANYASO: The Meyers-Briggs test is a test of personality. They assign personality traits and how they impact leadership and other things in your career. Then they have facets, which they go into in terms of your temperament and things like that. So my temperament is to be creative, I don't like routine or that kind of thing. So I didn't rehearse anybody I just said I want you on the program I worked out a program put them in various slots and said we are going to start at this time and I want you to be there and you will go on. Well, it was a magnificent program nobody realized it hadn't been rehearsed. I had the brother of one of my contacts in radio who had studied mime in Paris and he did a historical piece on African-American culture from slavery to freedom without saying a word; everybody talked about it for weeks. He was just tremendous. We had our former Fulbrighter who was a violinist and teaching in the schools in Haiti he did some selections, classical music. We had our choir, we had our dance groups and we had people reading. There was a woman who had lived in New York; a lot of Haitians live in New York they don't all live in Miami. She had lived in New York and come back to work with their ministry of culture and so I had Marie Lourde as the moderator and it was a great program.

Q: That brings up a good question. You are the American culture attaché½ when you are doing a program like this with an awful lot of talent within the country basically though you are trying to obviously encourage it but at the same time you are trying to portray America.

ANYASO: I am.

Q: How did you get the American thrust to this?

ANYASO: The American thrust was that Eileen's kids came in and did Alvin Ailey, an American choreographer/dancer. It's a Martin Luther King program so we are talking about civil rights, some of his speeches and readings so you have that. Jazz, of course, is American so the kids did the jazz dancing and some popular music, I think they did a Janet Jackson's piece; it was a Janet Jackson song they danced to. So yes I always had to have an American hook or core to my programs and they did it very well, they did extremely well. I don't think anybody else was really aware of how much talent there was in Haiti and they hadn't quite brought it all together so that people could see it and that was the comment that was made to me. That I had done something that they should have done but hadn't done in exposing all this talent and I had done it with an American twist. So they liked that.

I had a couple of music groups, the agency still sent out music groups to various countries, I had, oh golly I'm trying to remember, he was a trumpeter come down with his little trio and he was pretty well known in the United States. Yes, his name was Jimmy Owens. I think most of these musicians lived in New York. My dream was to have them perform at the Sans Souci Palace, which was a famous palace in Haiti, which is now a ruin but the façade½ is still there.



Q: This is Henri Christophe, I think...

ANYASO: Henri Christophe's palace and if you looked that up and you have this band playing there it would be magnificent; that was the thinking; it was the Jimmy Owens trio. Well we went up I forget where we were going but it was up country and it rained. So we couldn't perform outside in front of this wonderful faïçade and the electricity had gone out so we spent some time trying to find the mayor of this little town to see if we couldn't get the electricity turned on because most of these instruments needed electricity. So we finally found him, they turned the electricity on, we found a high school auditorium and I thought we'll have no audience but we did, we had a pretty nice audience and they performed beautifully but that was an experience. While we were up there, however, they had to do some sightseeing and Haiti still has these little burros; we think of them when we look at our Westerns and televisions you have horses and these burros, especially Mexican burros.

Q: Very small...

ANYASO: Sort of small horses or mules. Anyway, but one of the tourist attractions was to get on these little burros and ride around and go up to the palace and that kind of thing; that was fun for them. Americans were always coming through; Haiti has interesting cultural ties to the U.S. and so there was a very famous poet, Quincy Troupe, who came down to Haiti and I was able to use him on a program. His wife had been an editor at the New York Times. Quincy, as I say was a poet fairly well known and he tends to be recognized as an expert on James Baldwin who is an African-American writer of some note especially in the sixties. Anyway I got him together with the writers in Haiti and there are many, many writers and that turned out to be a nice program.

I also had an actor/Director, William Reaves, come down. Haiti had a several TV stations and they had actors who performed in various programs at the various stations so we had an acting workshop. Now the gentleman who came down, I'm trying to remember his name and it's not going to come to me, but that turned out very well. So I'm on a roll, we are doing all kinds of things, there is a lot of activity, and I'm bringing different parts of the community together with Americans because, of course, we always invited our Americans to be at the programs. The ambassador would come to the programs and, in fact, we had some movie programs at his residence and it was all working very well; the American cultural program was alive and well.



Then I had another group, which was sort of a rock and roll band Luther Guitar, Jr. Johnson's band. Don't ask me, I didn't know him either and so Luther had his band come but something happened. He was going to perform in the Dominican Republic, which is the other part of the island of Hispaniola. The Dominican Republic and Haiti comprise the island. So they were going to perform in the Dominican Republic and then come over to Haiti; good, something happened to the plane and they were late. Our program was destroyed almost. By the time they got to Haiti we only had time for one program. So what to do? There was a Holiday Inn right down near the presidential palace right on this Place des Heroes which is what they called it and had a wonderful wide expanse, it was a plus it was a boulevard so we had that whole thing roped off. One of the technicians at the radio station also had sound equipment and they rented it to musicians all the time and we got them to set up sound equipment. We just put them out on the plaza and they started playing and before we knew it we had five thousand people on the plaza dancing; it was like Carnival.

I had fun in Haiti they are wonderful people

Q: Tell me you were obviously part of the embassy, there is a public affairs officer, how did you relate to the public affairs officer?

ANYASO: She and I are still very good friends. Now she tended to handle all the press things, she knew about the radio stations, I dealt with them too from a cultural point of view but she was very pleased because the program had sort of been moribund. We had gotten it going, we had a very good cultural assistant and she participated too. She came to the programs, she was delighted that we could have ties to the university again and, as a matter of fact, when we were both leaving they invited us over to the university and they gave us these certificates for our contributions to the work that they were doing over there. Susan Clyde was my PAO and a very competent, very mild mannered person and we got along great; she was very supportive of me. I have four children so we had to make sure the house was okay and the school but she helped me through all of those kinds of things on a personal level as well as supported me in terms of the programs I was doing. I didn't have any problems at all; she was quite good.

Q: What was the feeling you got from the university? Was it one university because so often in other countries the university becomes the hot bed of oh Marxism and sort of anti-Americanism. It's the sort of thing where if you are at university you are anti-American and then you graduate and then you try to get a job at IBM. How did you find the university at that time?



ANYASO: The Haitian society is divided into two. You have an upper class and then you have the others. The upper class tends to be Mulatto and the others tend to be Black. So when you have a situation like that with many of the Mulatto's sending their kids overseas to schools a lot of them went to school in France, many went to school in the United States; we had educational advising and all of that. So you are left with the average and the lower class Haitians who see this university as a way to success and so there wasn't much philosophical thinking going on; people were bearing down wanting to take those courses and they were focused on that, learning as opposed to anything else so it wasn't a hot bed.

Q: Basically you were seeing a repetition of your experience? It was at Morgan State wasn't it?

ANYASO: Yes.

Q: I mean this was a way out of...

ANYASO: Yes you didn't have the luxury of protesting.

Q: ...the upper class kids who could play around and then daddy will get them a job after it's all over.

ANYASO: That's true, not only a job but usually daddy had the company so you worked for daddy's company.

Q: I'm somewhat familiar with the history of Haiti and you've had these essentially civil wars from time to time between the Mulatto's and the Blacks; I don't know how you describe them. It has not been a benign society.

ANYASO: No, it hasn't.

Q: Did you feel we were making an effort to turning it into I mean trying to mix up and raise the level of ...

ANYASO: We certainly were trying to raise the level of the people there. AID was very active in doing that although there is a funny story that the Haitians always told us that had to do with their little pigs; you know they raised pigs.



Q: Yes.

ANYASO: One or two, you are not talking about a big pig farm. They were a special kind of pig they were little black pigs and they have this national dish in which they use pork from these pigs; it is very good and very Haitian. Well there was some disease that attacked the poor little pigs and AID advised them that they would have to get rid of these pigs but don't worry we will replace them with these little pink pigs. Well, the Haitians never understood how that was going to be helpful to them and so the very smart ones smuggled the little black pigs over to Jamaica and hid out for a while with their little pigs until things blew over, until this epidemic or whatever it was was over and then they brought their little pigs back; they never liked those little pink pigs. It was an uphill battle because Haiti has to be the poorest country in the world, not just in our western hemisphere but in the world.

Q: How about migration? What was the migration situation while you were there?

ANYASO: I didn't really deal with that. I know consular people dealt with that and we had boat people; it was just heartbreaking because there was so much poverty. My colleague Marie Lourde who had helped me with this program had gone out to one of the villages, and there was nothing to eat. People were starving to death and she had met this one woman who had a family of seven kids and they were all starving and so she said to Marie Lourde please take one of my children to give that child a chance to live, survive. She ended up taking two; she adopted two of those children, a little boy and a little girl. I think she raised the little boy but she gave the little girl to the nuns in the convent to raise. But absolutely awful poverty in the villages, we didn't see it in Port-au-Prince. What we saw were these great heaps of trash and garbage and people, some old women bathing in the sewers. There were days you just really didn't want to go out, as it was just a little depressing. So the poverty was there, it was pretty bad and you can understand why people can get on those boats and try to have a better life.

Q: What about voodoo? I realize this is a real religion; it's not...in the States it's turned into a spooky thing...

ANYASO: Hollywood yes.

Q: ...I was wondering whether two things. One what was your impression of it and also I would think that you would attract some of the hippie types from the United States who wanted to come down. I mean they are into spiritualism and all this kind of stuff and they'd be attracted and would probably muck things up.



ANYASO: We didn't have it; it wasn't like the kids who were going to Nepal and places like that during this time. Actually since Voodoo was popular in the States you would have the priest going to the States to minister to the various Voodoo communities. In fact, there were a couple of very famous voodoo priests and one of them came to see me because he needed a visa. I could give him a reference supporting his application and I did that. For some of them it was a way to survive, they would have these shows; they would have the dancers and all the glitzy stuff and make money. Of course, when tourism fell off that was not profitable again. There was a very famous cultural institute, which was very close to the embassy, I was in the consulate building I wasn't in the embassy building and it was close to us at the consulate; the consulate was downstairs and USIS, the U.S. Information Service was upstairs. So I became friends with one of the consular officers and we decided we should understand this culture and so we decided to take courses at this institute in Voodoo. We did and Max and I can't remember Max's last name who headed it up, he was very friendly and we started taking the course. He would invite in priests and we got to know people; we went to some of the Hougan and the Voodoo temples and saw what went on there and some of the practices and the Voodoo flags. It seems that once a year and it's really around Easter time, I don't know why all these pagan activities tend to happen around Easter time but anyway the oldest Voodoo rite in Haiti was a Dahomian rite. There had been some Dahomian slaves who had come to Haiti and they had continued their religion and this old Voodoo center was up in Gonaives, which is up north. So Mary Beth, my friend and I, decided we were going to go for the ceremony this year.

Also around this time people dressed up, it was sort of like Halloween but men liked to dress up as women and then they would be pregnant, it was rowdy and they called them the rah-rahs. They would go around with these branches, dancing and singing and drinking having a good time. So the Embassy regional security officer would always lecture us at the embassy to stay away from these people and that they were dangerous and certainly don't get caught in a crowd. You could understand that and I understood that but we were going to go up and take this highway one and go up for the ceremony. Well, we got lost and we found ourselves in the midst of these rah-rah people, which we were not supposed to do. I was a little frightened, I said, "Oh God, we are going to get into trouble." So I looked over and the priest I had helped with the visa was in this group. So I waved and his wife was there, she had come with him so I knew two faces in the crowd and they came over they are lovely people and I explained how we were lost. They said, "No problem. Where are you going?" I said, "We are going up to Gonaives for the ceremony." So they got one of the young boys and sat him in the car and he showed us how to get going and then he got out and we were on our way; so I wasn't afraid of those rah-rahs anymore, they were just very helpful to us.

We did get to Gonaives and we observed a ceremony and it was very pleasant; it was nothing like the Hollywood type of Voodoo ceremony but they did have the tall hats and the candles. It was sort of mystical, the movements were very slow, it was almost like in Islam they have this group, what do they call them?



Q: Whirling Dervishes.

ANYASO: This wasn't Dervishes but there is a name for this brand of Islam.

Q: I know what you mean.

ANYASO: Suffis, it was sort of like them. It was very slow dancing and they did have chickens. This went on for several days and every day there was something different; I think there was one day when they were going to be sacrificing cows or something, I wasn't up for that. We left it at the slow part of it but it is very much a part of the society. Voodoo had been looked down upon as was Creole but I think it had at that point, gained a certain respectability, people didn't frown upon it and think it was just demon worship and worshipping snakes. Creole was being more and more used, the upper class certainly used French but more and more people were using Creole and they were using Creole in the school so I think there was a cultural change there.

Q: Did you find yourself working with or working opposed to the French cultural attaché? I assumed they had a French cultural programs there?

ANYASO: They did. The French are a very clever people and I think in the sixties perhaps, they were on this mission to civilize the world and bring French culture to the world. Haiti was a part of Francophonie and so yes they were definitely there, they had a good program and we were not competing. I found in Haiti as well as my next post, which was in Niger, they showed American movies; sometimes they would subtitle them in French. But they were pushing culture and people liked American movies and they showed American movies and so we worked together; so no we didn't compete. I always found even in Nigeria the French cultural center people, the director was always a good friend; sometimes we didn't coordinate our calendars the way we should have and I remember I had a big exhibit opening this was back in Nigeria on the night that they brought Memphis Slim the French cultural center bought Memphis Slim to Lagos. I was livid, he was a living jazz legend who had been living in Paris and they brought him down. So a lot of the audience came, they were very sweet people the Nigerians. They came and they said you know they are having Memphis Slim over there at the French cultural center so I can't stay very long but they at least stayed for the opening and then they scurried off to the French cultural center. I wanted to go myself but unfortunately I didn't have the time to do that. But no, I never competed with them I never felt that relations were bad they were very good.

Q: When you lived there did you pick up some parasite or something like that; you said you had to leave medically?



ANYASO: I did, it wasn't a parasite you know how you have certain problems and you just delay doing anything about them? I had delayed too long so the Embassy nurse and I decided I really should get back and have an operation. I should have had years ago but I didn't.

Q: So then what happened? You left there in...

ANYASO: I left there...

Q: ...1990.

ANYASO: 1990 it was two years in Haiti, unfortunately. I was sorry to leave because I did like the Haitian people a great deal and my kids had a good time there; the school was good, my husband...

Q: Did they pick up French?

ANYASO: They did, they studied French in school and used it and that was very helpful; just a little Creole I think. Well they wanted me to continue with the French so I bid on Francophone African posts for my next assignment and I got Niger.

Q: Let's see you went to Niger and you were there from what?

ANYASO: 1990-1993.

Q: '93, okay, Niger looking at the map here is bounded by Algeria, Libya, Chad, Nigeria, Benin, Central African Republic and Mali; it's really stuck in the middle.

ANYASO: It's a huge country; it's in the middle of the Sahel.

Q: Yes. Let's talk first about Niger on it's own. What is the political and economic system?

ANYASO: Another poor country. Their claim to economic fame I guess would be uranium and uranium prices had plummeted by the time I got there so they weren't doing very well at all. They did have cattle so leather goods.



Q: Did they sell the cattle? Is it one of these things where the more cows you have the wealthier you are type of thing?

ANYASO: That's true, however, they did sell them; they earned them actually. You know there is this migration we studied in geography, I think they called it transhumation. We studied it in geography and you'd go from where you were down and around so these cattle went all the way down to the west coast of Africa from Niger, hundreds and hundreds of miles. They had this whole migrant culture that went with that and then their kids weren't going to school. They had a Tuareg situation...

Q: These were the blue people because of the blue scarves they wore.

ANYASO: The men in blue who rode camels and who had been a part of the trade between the Maghreb in North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa carrying gold from the south and salt from the north to the south and gold in the south and also slaves; they were a part of the slave trade. But in the independence in Niger they had lost out; let's face it these guys were very powerful and tied into communities all across from Sudan to Senegal but they were sort of locked out of government, this new government.

Q: In the old Francophone Africa it was almost without borders there.

ANYASO: It was almost without borders.

Q: Nations all of a sudden...

ANYASO: It had a really huge impact on these countries. You have Tuaregs both in Niger and in Mali, which is right next door. At the time I was there in those three years the Tuaregs were rather peaceful as opposed to the ones in Mali who were rather aggressive; they had attacked and they were attacking the government for resources because they too had been locked out of the government in terms of positions. In employment they too weren't getting the education so they were very unhappy in both places.



We had in Niger let me see when I first got there I think Carl Cundiff was the ambassador; then Ambassador Jennifer Ward came. Anyway, we were interested in the Tuaregs and bought their leather goods. They had this wonderful jewelry; the various towns in various Sahelian countries had their own cross so you have this beautiful silver jewelry; the Agadez Cross is probably the best known but there was Tahwa and Zinder and a lot of other towns too; there were about 23 crosses. There was this famous jeweler, Tuareg jeweler, and the ambassador's wife, Mrs. Cundiff was saying we've got to do something, we should have a show and my predecessor had ignored her and as soon as I got off the plane practically she was there with her proposal. "Oh yes, we have to have an exhibit of this jewelry," and I said, "Why not?" Programs are programs and any way we can promote culture and as I say put in an American spin we'll do it. There was a separate American cultural center, which I was director of, we had a little exhibit hall and so we ended up with a combined exhibit of the jewelry. Mrs. Cundiff had made these white hands in wood and had them painted white and then we put rings and jewelry on the fingers; it was very attractive and against black velvet or indigo cloth, I think we used indigo cloth. So that was very attractive and there was a very fine photographer in town who was French and he had been out in the desert where the Tuaregs live and he had photographed many Tuareg women wearing this jewelry so we had a combined photography and jewelry exhibit which was, I think, my introduction to Niamey, which is the capital of Niger, where we were. It was beautiful.

Q: Of course, the jewelry was portable wealth for a migratory group.

ANYASO: Portable wealth, absolutely. It wasn't gold but it was very beautiful, beautiful.

Q: You mentioned crosses. How stood Islam in Niger while you were there?

ANYASO: How stood it? It stood tall; I would say 99 percent of the people were Muslims.

Q: Why the crosses then? Was it a jewelry symbol more than anything else?

ANYASO: Not really, you have these crosses because those were like symbols for the town. Agadez they had a cross, it was very much like in Ethiopia I found the same thing that the towns had these crosses, you know the Coptic crosses from Ethiopia.

Q: Each one has it's own...



ANYASO: Right, each one had it's own design and it had nothing to do with Christianity but it was a cross. We forget, I think sometimes we forget, that Christianity was built on many cultures and how we got the Christian cross I don't know but there are all kinds of crosses in the ancient world including in Niger.

Q: Well actually I think crosses started out as torture instrument.

ANYASO: Right with the Romans, the Romans used it that way.

Q: And the crucifixion of Christ and the rest is history.

ANYASO: Right, exactly. So you have this very impoverished country and what do you do? AID had a very good program at the time; I think they were spending about \$26 million. They were trying to get them to...they had all these animal hides and they wanted to add value to the hides so they would get more money for it and that kind of thing so they worked with them on the leather much of which was exported to Europe. They were teaching them how to grow onions; they had the best onions, huge monster onions and that was pretty lucrative. They also had pottery, their own kind of pottery and this I learned about when President Carter came. President Carter has his program; it was called Global 2000 and sponsored by The Carter Center.

Q: This said he is no longer president.

ANYASO: He is no longer president, he is a former president but he has this Global 2000 Program much of it having to do with health in some countries. In Niger they have this guinea worm, which is a horrible infestation, you put your leg in the water and there are these parasites and they get into your skin and they grow sort of like a tapeworm would grow, horrible. So he was working on guinea worm and it was a good thing to do. We had Peace Corps there and they did some health but a lot of English teaching and so what was I going to do? I had a cultural center, I did exhibits, we had educational advising, we had a very good library and I think they enjoyed using that. The jewel in our crown was our English language-teaching program.

Q: Okay, I'm looking at Niger and here is an impoverished country in the middle of Africa...

ANYASO: Yes.

Q: ...with strong ties to another civilization, which is France and so adding English to the mix what does this mean to the Nigerians and why English?



ANYASO: Why English is right. English because they recognized it as the language of business and they recognized it as the language of science and they recognized that they could be much more marketable if they had English. So we had classes that were always full and we also had off site classes in the ministries. At one point I think the prime minister or the deputy prime minister or somebody was taking English from us and so they felt that it was very valuable and they liked Americans during this time. This was all pre-9/11 and we were sort of popular, our ambassador was popular, all of our ambassadors were popular, we got out into the community. In Niger we worked it out so that once we had international visitors the DCM or the ambassador would have them to lunch; we made them feel very special and they were because they had been invited by the State Department to visit the United States in their field so it worked very well. As I say, we weren't very competitive because it's a very small society; a small population but there was enough for everybody to do.

Now I discovered in Niger that they too had a music school; now this wasn't the Anglicans or those Saint Trinity Episcopal nuns, this was actually done by the French. They had a huge French cultural center and sometimes we used it for our programs and they were very good about it, they showed the movies but they have this music school, a very fine music school. When we had our music groups come in we would always take them to classes at the music school so it was a very cooperative arrangement. I didn't feel that we were competing or at odds with the French at all.

Q: Were there any changes of government while you were there? I mean were there coups or that sort of thing?

ANYASO: I had in Nigeria. In 1985 we had the Babangida coup which I was there for. In Niger there was an attempted coup; the students and the labor unions were out in the streets protesting against the government and the government wasn't very happy about this so they had tanks in the streets. Then they decided they would take over the government so it was a situation and this was under Ambassador Ward, where we wanted to be on record as being against taking over a government in this way. Ambassador Ward turned to me and said, "Well my PAO, I want you to go over to the radio station with this statement." We had gotten a statement from the State Department on this situation. "Take over this statement and get them to read it." I said, "You want me to do what? Would you explain that again?" She said, "I want you to go over there and take this statement and have it read." So I said, "Good."



So I got my little car and driver, we had a driver at the time; we hadn't merged with the State Department at the time so we still had little things like cars and things like that. So I got in the car with the driver and said, "Ibrahim we are going over to the radio station," and he sort of looked at me because they had ringed the radio station with tanks and there were all these military guys sitting on these tanks with rifles. We went over there, we had been over there many times before without the tanks but we went over there, we had a diplomatic tag on the car and they let us in, amazing. We got in and I asked to see the director, I knew him very well, and I said, "Well I'm here because we are very concerned about the situation. The U.S. government does not support a take over like this." I said, "I have a statement here from the State Department and I'd be very much obliged if you would read our position." Not a problem, he took it, went into the studio and put it on the air. We got credit for supporting a democratic government in Niger. I felt good about our role in that and we were very open about it and luckily there were no negative consequences, they didn't arrest me or put me in jail or anything or complain to our ambassador or make a complaint of the ambassador, call her in or complain.

Q: Actually you were supporting the government.

ANYASO: We were supporting the government, right. Well we were supporting actually the students and the labor unions who were protesting against the government that's why it made it a little dicey but we were supporting democracy is what we were doing and we were against the military.

Q: Were the Libyans messing around?

ANYASO: The Libyans always messed around. They liked to meddle in various things so as you said, looking at the map it's right above Niger. In fact, there is a strip on that particular border where there is uranium, which they had their eye on. So they were actually trying to claim it as a part of Libya but it wasn't so there was that kind of friction. But in a country that's very, very poor when people offer you resources you take them so I think that the Niger government got a lot of support from France but not enough, they got some support from us but not enough and so Libya also offered them support. The large central Mosque was built by the Libyans and there was an airline that was built and funded by the Libyans. The Libyan cultural palace, cultural center, was right next to mine.

Q: What do they have in the way of culture outside the works of Qadhafi or something?

ANYASO: I know, I know. I didn't see much activity there; however, when the Gulf War started my center was attacked.



Q: You were there during the Gulf War?

ANYASO: '91.

Q: This is '91 this is Sudan; I think it was '90.

ANYASO: Yes, it was '90.

Q: When Saddam Hussein moved into Kuwait so basically was it that they were supporting Saddam or was it just an Islamic thing because the Egyptians and Syrians were on our side in this.

ANYASO: Exactly, they were, I think it was an Islamic thing and I think it was Libyan meddling and it was the university students who used our library, many of them. We got a call saying that they had spotted students coming across the bridge from the university into town; we didn't know where they were headed but they showed up at our center, which is across from the main market. They had lots of slingshots and rocks and Molotov cocktails.

Q: That shows some preparation.

ANYASO: There was some preparation.

Q: This was not spontaneous.

ANYASO: No, they broke out every window, they burned a couple of our cars and the building also caught on fire. So we were in touch with the embassy, which is away from us letting them know what was going on. I had the USIS photographer taking photos of all the protestors and everything so we had a photographic record of everything. Then the embassy sent help in the form of the station chief to get us out of there so no one was hurt in this episode but what I had been concerned about before I went to Niger was the security. For ten years before I got there there had been recommendations to move the center because they felt there wasn't enough set back, it was right in the heart of the city and it would not be safe if there was a threat. So when we had a threat and it was attacked they realized we really should move it so I spent a great deal of my time looking for a new location.



In the meantime, they put all of us into the embassy and I think we were squeezed into two rooms in the embassy for six months or so while we were looking for a new place. We found a very good location with a lot of set-back, we had space for our English teaching, we had space for a library but you know the State Department requires you to have certain security upgrades and things like that. We had requested that and they lost the request and we were waiting and waiting and waiting and finally I think they got a DynCorp contractor out to supervise the installation of cameras and mirrors and doors that we needed so we finally got a new cultural center; beautiful. It was really a very nice one and I think I told Ambassador Ward we'd really been through it and I said, "What we are going to do is we are going to put a plaque on that building with your name and my name so that we will never be forgotten." The new PAO who just went out to Niger, Robert Tate, was in touch with me not long ago and he said, "I see your name every day when I go into the office."

Q: Let's talk about the attack a bit. How serious was this? Was anybody's life or health threatened during it?

ANYASO: I think so if we hadn't gotten out. It's funny, these things happen and it's frightening when it is going on and then it just goes away. There were no repercussions, the government was concerned and they provided protection and all of that, after the fact. I never felt that the Nigeriens had their hearts in it and as I say I think it was all staged by the Libyans.

Q: You might say a demonstration demonstration had a fanatical mob.

ANYASO: Right.

Q: I mean as happened in Islamabad about the same time no that was in '79 when several Americans were killed.

ANYASO: I know but there were no weapons.

Q: That was a fanatical crowd and it wasn't even planned. It was a spontaneous thing with the Islamic fundamentalists in Pakistan and just all of a sudden attacked. It was a very dangerous situation but this was...

ANYASO: This was not fanatical.

Q: We all know these demonstrations can get a little out of hand.



ANYASO: Yes.

Q: But basically the same people throwing rocks at you are in line to get books the next day.

ANYASO: Exactly, exactly the way we saw it and the way it happened. It was serious enough, however, that the department included it in its global terrorism report that year because it was an attack on an American facility during that period.

Q: Well how was the Sahel played out in those days?

ANYASO: Let me just say that in terms of our embassies and embassies I was familiar with either I had worked there or had friends working we had probably the highest morale of any embassy where I had ever been or seen, France, other African countries. The morale was very, very high, the different agencies worked well together. As I said we had Peace Corps and they had softball tournaments, we had a softball team and then we'd have Peace Corps volunteers from other countries, we put them up in our home and they would come and have a tournament, a competition. It was very hot in Niger; I think temperatures would be 120-125 in the shade. So every house had a swimming pool so that you could cool off and that helped to keep us going and hydrated. I went over to Burkina Faso, which is one of the neighbors for FESPACO (The Panafrican Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou), sort of a neighbor of Burkina where is Burkina Faso.

Q: It's over there it butts onto Egypt.

ANYASO: Yeah there it is down there it's like a top of a bottle. I went over there and it is lively and dynamic so things in the Sahel were going very well. It's has no oil so most of the Sahelian countries are poor, lots of camels but we were working and trying to develop their agriculture and I think in some of the countries they started growing cotton and things like that to bring the economy up so it wasn't so bad. The Cedi, no the Franc their money was based on the French Franc. The bottom fell out of their economies after I left in '93 when the French withdraw that support of the monetary systems in those countries; it just plummeted. AID also left Niger, they had a regional representative or somebody there but the funding that they used to put in there. I don't know how they are managing at the moment; but I think uranium prices have gone back up and remember during the Iraq war situation of Ambassador Wilson and his wife...

Q: Yes.



ANYASO: ...he went to Niger.

Q: Joe Wilson came to Niger to find out about yellow cake.

ANYASO: Yellow cake, which is part uranium.

Q: He was sent by the CIA to see if Saddam Hussein was buying...

ANYASO: Yes, Valerie Plame was...

Q: ...apparently one gathers there was a forged communication, which implied that Niger was supplying Saddam with yellow cake and it wasn't. A whole sort of one of these Washington scandals about disclosing that Joe Wilson, whom I've interviewed by the way before this happened, that his wife was a covert CIA operative which she was. It was quite a scandal during the George W. Bush administration.

ANYASO: It was but there you go uranium prices have come back and that's very helpful to their economy.

Q: How was schooling for your kids?

ANYASO: They had a very good school there in Niger. We had U.S. professors, teachers, and there again they added to the mix and the community and some very, very nice people, good people. The kids played soccer; I didn't have any problems with the curriculum at all.

Q: How old were your kids by this time?

ANYASO: Well actually I had sent my older boy to high school in the States and my older daughter was in school in Madeira, I think. So I only had my younger daughter and my younger son the first couple of years and then my younger daughter went to school in the States so I ended up primarily with one kid.

Q: I'm looking at the clock. I really have to stop at this point because I have to pick something up. I notice you've been coughing too so...

ANYASO: I've been coughing because my allergies are bad.



Q: Okay well we'll pick this up the next time in 1992 or 3?

ANYASO: Maybe '92.

Q: And what did you do?

ANYASO: What did we do? Well we finished with the \_\_\_\_\_ and all of that. It was just more of the same, nothing spectacular after that. Well I can pick it up there; we did more travel in the country.

Q: Okay, we will talk about your travel before we move you out of Niger.

ANYASO: Okay.

Q: Okay today is the 5th of November 2009 with Claudia Anyaso. Claudia we are talking about travels is it in Niger?

ANYASO: It is in Niger, that's correct.

Q: It's sort of a place where you don't know...is Timbuktu in Niger?

ANYASO: No, Timbuktu is in Mali.

Q: Mali yes. What's in Niger?



ANYASO: Funny you should ask. What's in Niger? Maradi, which is a large town I don't know positioning in terms of the map but it's certainly outside of Niamey. Tahoua is another commercial town there and a town that I liked a lot was near the border with Nigeria. I'm trying to remember the name of it because it had a sultan down there and we would go down there and talk with the sultan. Zinder, which sounds like something out of the Arabian nights, Zinder. The Sultan of Zinder was down there and they had lots of cattle. One of the things about Niger is that a lot of people kept cattle and they were migratory people; they would walk the cattle all the way down through Nigeria even to the southern part. Anyway, the reason I liked Zinder was because the people were more like Nigerians and then I discovered that there had been an old kingdom called Borno, B-O-R-N-O, which had been in Nigeria and had spilled over into Niger and that's why the people there were more like Nigerians.

Q: When you say Nigerians I think of the three major groups of Nigerians.

ANYASO: Yes.

Q: Which ones of these were the...

ANYASO: Oh I don't know the people were just more outgoing, ebullient and friendly. I think Nigeriens on the whole were much more, what's the word, much quieter, much more restrained. I remember the Wadobi, who are part of the Tuareg's, the ones who do the makeup on their faces, the eyes and all of that but that is all they did. They moved their eyes, they didn't move their bodies, there were no hand gestures, there were no dances all they did was move their eyes. So these people down in Zinder were much closer to their Nigerian neighbors. As it happened, the next president of the country was to come, I think, from Zinder. We had a Voice of America personality who spoke fluent Hausa and he had gone down and interviewed this politician down in Zinder under a tree. So after he was elected president he was visiting the United States he remembered that the only person who paid any attention to him at all was this VOA reporter so he insisted on his U.S. schedule that he stop in at VOA and greet people. They, of course, did a taping with him there; that was wonderful.

Q: What role did the Sultan have in Niger?



ANYASO: There had been a jihad across the Sahara from Saudi Arabia through Sudan all the way across and so the religion of Islam had come into the country through the northern part of Nigeria; Nigeria is 50 percent Muslim, mostly in the north but in Niger 99 percent of the population was Muslim. This Sultan was a part of that earlier period where Islam was coming into the country, they set up these Caliphates and things like that so a remnant of that was this Sultan in Zinder; you may recall that there is also a Sultan in Nigeria who is in Sokoto. So it was very historic to have him down there and he was a well-regarded person in the country. He did not play a major role in the political life of the country as it were because I think the military as in Nigeria; the military was the most powerful institution in the country.

The other place I visited and this was at the request of the former ambassador from Niger to the United States, Djermakoye, who wanted to take us down and he lived in the southern part of the country. He wanted us to know that there had been kings in Niger called after his family Djermakoye; so he took us down for a nephew's wedding. We saw the tombs of these kings and it gave us a better understanding of the history of the country because for most people Niger is not on the radar, it's not there at all and people don't know anything about it, it doesn't have much of a history except that it does. Its history goes all the way back millions of years, I believe, there was an archeologist from the University of Chicago who was doing work in the country in the north in the Tuareg areas of the country. He was involved in unearthing dinosaur bones and he was trying to make the link between dinosaurs and birds. Other excavations also revealed that the country was not always dessert but there had been oases, there had been rivers, there was greenery in this part of the world and there were people there. They recently unearthed some skeletal remains of two types of people who were living in this area; so the history of the country goes back a long way although we now see it as a small impoverished African country.

Q: Was there anything we could do public affairs wise in these small little like the Sultanate and other places? Were we trying to reach out to them at all?

ANYASO: Well we were. The reason we were traveling around and talking to people was that we brought experts out to advise them on various things, education and things like that. I even at one point brought a storyteller down from Paris; he was a young man who had graduated from Georgetown University, he had married, I think, a French woman and he was living in Paris and he was telling these wonderful stories, very creative guy. Well storytelling, the oral tradition is very strong in Niger and in other parts of Africa. So people marveled at this American who was also a storyteller and he had little instruments that he would use to amplify his stories. So I remember taking him around to Maradi. In most of the large towns they have these cultural centers and we tried to have good relations with the directors and the staffs of these cultural centers so we arranged a program for this storyteller to go down there. Most of the important people of the town came out including one of their filmmakers. We organized the program so that there were local storytellers as well as our guest storyteller; so it was a very nice evening.



What I remembered from that particular time was that one of the things we were doing was promoting Democracy so it sort of entered into all of our conversations. I remember this filmmaker looking at me and saying, "Okay, Democracy is fine, good, people should participate but people are hungry and so far Democracy hasn't done anything for us." They had a national assembly, they had had a sovereign national conference where all the people could come and voice their opinions but so far people didn't see any tangible results from it so he wanted to let me know that Democracy wasn't very good if it didn't bring tangible results, if people were still starving what was the good of it. So that sort of struck me, caught my attention, and I think that we tried to work very hard. AID had a program in the country at that point in reaching out to areas like that and trying to boost economic development in the country.

Q: Well then you left Niger when?

ANYASO: I left Niger in 1993.

Q: Where did you go?

ANYASO: I went back to Washington. You know how the Foreign Service deals with us they don't want us to stay out too long without coming back to headquarters because of well culture shock and cultural adaptation issues. So I went back to Washington and I worked in the Africa office. We were still USIA at the time so I worked in the Africa office. I was the desk officer for wait a minute, oh dear, you know when you get older you forget things...

When I left Niger I did not go back to Washington. When I left Niger I went back to Nigeria because my husband and I had this arrangement there I would choose a post and then he would have an opportunity. Well his turn came and I went back to Nigeria and from 1993-1997 I was in Abuja, which was the new capital, a pretty tough assignment. It was the time of a very brutal Nigerian dictator, Sani Abacha so I was starting up the USIS office in Abuja during this awful time when many of my contacts were being harassed, were being followed by the State security people and were being arrested so this was not a very happy time for Nigerians or for people who were serving in the country. Although I must say people kept their sense of humor, life went on, I had good relations with the educators and the media and we still continued programs.



The one restriction I had because we did not want to be too close to this particular regime so even though I set up the office in Abuja my supervisor who was Tom Hull who was down in Lagos said, "You will have nothing to do with the regime, you will concentrate on the Eastern part of the country." So I spent a lot of my time driving from Abuja to what used to be the old Ibo Biafra part of the country. So I went to Warri, I went to Enugu; I went to Port Harcourt and places like that trying to establish our relations. So that was what was going on with me in that particular time period. I believe at this point Walter Carrington was our ambassador in Nigeria and he had a very tough road to hoe because there were a lot of human rights violations. There was a very influential opposition group in the country called NADEKO. He aligned himself with NADEKO and, I think, his life was pretty much in jeopardy from the Abacha regime. I set up the office, I got a building, I staffed it up from '93-'97 and then I left in '97.

Q: You were there...

ANYASO: Four years.

Q: In Nigeria?

ANYASO: In Nigeria in Abuja.

Q: What was Abuja like? This was a new capital wasn't it?

ANYASO: Yeah, the infrastructure wasn't there; the housing had been built as a city for very rich people. There was no housing for the middle stratum, the professionals or even the support staff so people were living in hovels. Many people were living in their offices sleeping on their desks. There was one restaurant but there wasn't very much there and so it caused all of us who were there some of the ministry people and the expat community to be very close because we were all experiencing the same thing.

Q: You were told okay so you're the USIA representative in this capital and you were told not to have any contact with the government. How the hell did you work that?



ANYASO: Well as I said I spent a lot of time in the east but also I meant there was the University of Abuja. They were private organizations I could work with, women's associations. I could work with, youth organizations. For example, the former president of the country after the civil war was Yakubu Gowon; he had set up a youth center and we could work with them. I should step back, his whole career after the civil war was to bring unity to the country so he had set up the national youth service corp., which was like a domestic Vista that we have here in this country so people could give service. The ringer was that their service would be outside of their home areas. If they were from the East they would have to serve in the West; if they were from the West they would serve in the North, the North would serve in the South; so he started those kinds of things. At the high school level they instituted some federal high schools, which also brought kids from different ethnic groups together. He was very smart, is, he's still living, person and he was absolutely dedicated to doing this. So he started this center to continue his work of reunification.

Q: How was he able to operate with this new government, which you say was brutal?

ANYASO: It was brutal and very greedy and very corrupt; I guess that's the beauty of Nigeria in a way. You could have this very brutal dictator and the state security officers everywhere spying on you but they would allow things to go on, life to go on, and so Gowon went on. I do remember inviting our ambassador to Abuja, was it Abuja? No, I was also working in Kaduna; I was everywhere. Kaduna was one of the larger; it used to be the old capital of northern Nigeria so we were having an American studies conference. The government didn't like that and so even though we had organized this conference in Kaduna and the ambassador had come up all of a sudden we were surrounded by these goons and they stopped the conference ambassador or not. We had participants from Ghana; I think Zimbabwe and some other places. They were saying no we are not going to let them stop us we are going to go on. The Nigerians having lived with this kind of thing and knowing how things worked very quietly got up and left, got their bags and departed. There was always even though life went on they would also bring down their fist from time to time; that wasn't the only program I had cancelled.

I was also working in neutral areas like the environment and we had invited a team from Clark University in Atlanta to come out for this workshop and be our experts at this workshop. Well some of the state security people also visited us and sat in on the workshop; now they didn't cancel it really but they kept a very close eye on what we were doing and I was never so offended in my life as when this state security person came over and asked me for per diem. I said, "You weren't invited and you are not getting any per diem." We did give him lunch but I wasn't going to pay his expenses to spy on us.



Q: When you went to see the Ibo area that was at one point called Biafra I mean this had been several decades after the war how did you find things? Were the Ibo fairly well integrated or was there a sort of the Ibo's will rise again feeling or not?

ANYASO: I think that like most of the Nigerians that I know think that the Ibo were eternally optimistic; they felt that they would come back. Now they had been invited back into the government. These ethnic problems are very interesting to watch; they had saturated the education ministry that was their religion almost and so the Northerners and the Westerners tried to get them out of their positions and that wasn't good but they didn't kick them out entirely. They still worked in the ministry but not in the leadership positions. When I went to the east they felt that they were marginalized over there; they felt that the government was not giving them support. Their infrastructure the roads were bad, there was one trunk line for telecommunications to the East and telephones never worked; so they felt neglected. When I was over there in a place like Enugu, which had been a hub of the East, was pretty quiet. I had taken a professor of business over there for a program and we went around to the university. The University of Nigeria had a professional school in Enugu and then we talked to some of the private business people over there; there was no business. Surveyors weren't having any business it was just awful for them. So when I left Nigeria at that point somebody asked me what did Sani Abacha contribute to the country and I said, "Well he actually contributed to an innovation called the Sani Abacha Stove which were these tin cans one on top of the other and they had sort of put coals in the bottom, they cut out a little door and then you would put things in the top to warm them up usually sawdust because people couldn't afford firewood at that point; it was difficult. When I left Nigeria in '97 and went back to Washington to be a desk officer I think Sani Abacha mysteriously died a month later. The stories around were that he had overdosed on Viagra or something like that but I don't believe many people mourned his passing.

Q: You came back in '97?

ANYASO: Yes.

Q: What did you do?

ANYASO: I was a desk officer; Marilyn Hulbert was our director at the time. I was responsible for Anglophone West Africa and nobody wanted to handle Mozambique and Angola so I also became the desk officer responsible for the post management for our staffs in Angola and Mozambique, which was wonderful because I had never visited those countries and this gave me an opportunity to get to southern Africa.



Q: What was your impression of these ex-Portuguese countries, which had had very substantial wars going on in them?

ANYASO: Well I tell you if I had thought Abuja was a new city and I thought difficult times but when I went to Luanda, Angola, the roads were not good and this was in the city. You could still see bullet holes in certain buildings and I said, "Oh they haven't done much since the war." Well they told me that the war had never reached Luanda but it still looked like a war zone. Then they had a museum, which I visited, and they have the car that one of the leaders had been riding in it and it was riddled with bullets; it was sort of depressing. Our embassy at the time was housed on a compound in trailers and I believe there was a swimming pool which gave them some recreation but they were housed in these little trailers and the plan was to get some property on the Corniche, which was very lovely; it ran along the river, along the ocean I guess and that's where all of the oil company executives were building homes.

I did visit the Catholic University in Luanda, it was a university that Michael Kennedy I believe he is Robert Kennedy's son who was killed in a skiing accident but anyway he was beloved in Angola and had contributed a lot of money and resources to helping this Catholic University get established, so that was going very well. I chatted about the different faculties and things like that and certainly we were giving book donations and assisting to the extent that we could this new university. One of the things we did in non-English speaking African countries was English language teaching so we also offered that particular service. I understood from the head of the university that it was very expensive to build this university because materials had to be brought in and it meant that everything cost two or three times what it would cost anywhere else; but they managed to do this. I went to the press center to talk about how journalism was going on in the country. They did have the press. They had one TV station I believe, there was no independent media there but I must say the press center was a very slick operation; it was worthy of being a press center anywhere.

Q: Was there still vestiges of a war going on?

ANYASO: One of the unfortunate things about that war in Angola were the land mines. Outside of Luanda it was really dangerous because the whole country was just full of these land mines and so one of the United Nations teams was working on removing them. But at that time many people were sequestered almost like on reservations in these camps but that was no way to live.

Q: Sort of USIA wise what were we doing there?



ANYASO: As I said, we were doing the usual education programs, the media programs, the educational advising. There are students coming to the United States from Angola and we would be advising them and their parents on how that process worked. We had speakers who would go out. There was collaboration between the staff in Angola and also in Mozambique with Brazil because of the Portuguese language so there were materials we could get from Brazil to use there. They did not like the materials we would get from Portugal I guess because of the colonial history there.

Q: Was the government in Angola at this time basically antagonistic toward the United States?

ANYASO: Yes. They felt that we had supported the wrong people, Jonas Savimbi. We had supported the wrong side in their war and so the people in charge were the people we had not supported. They weren't very what's the word the relationship was...

Q: Inhospitable?

ANYASO: ...it was a strained relationship between our embassy and the government.

Q: I think the interesting thing is that...

ANYASO: Which was Marxist.

Q: ...USIA activities could continue in a country that was ruled from the top, which was Marxist but you still could do something.

ANYASO: We still could do something. We had always maintained that our programs were citizen programs, teachers, professors, students, professionals; it was not a government kind of program, which was the beauty in what we could do. We could have relations with their institutions and actually from time to time they might make noises about approving Fulbright participants from their country but there wasn't too much of that; they more or less left us alone. AID also worked there in development and I discovered a private U.S. NGO that was working there the MCID, Mississippi Consortium of Universities for Development and it was run out of Jackson, Mississippi, by an African-American woman, Dr. Allie Mack. I said, "Wow, what are you doing?" Of course they were working on different programs, conducting capacity building programs and that was wonderful. So those kinds of things...



Q: Were any other countries active there, doing the same thing that we were doing or were we kind of a major contributor at least to outside assistance?

ANYASO: You know I can't really say I just don't know what their other donors were doing. I do know that all of those oil companies and several of them from the United States were training people and giving scholarships. There is a point of friction between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola because on the northern border there is oil and it's being claimed by the Angolans, Cabinda. The oil companies were talking to us about setting up English language training so that we could teach their employees to speak English so that was going on and I believe when Madeleine Albright was secretary of State she actually visited Cabinda to see what was going on; it was one of those in and out trips. So I don't know what the other donors were doing but they were making an awful lot of money out of the oil. So it's not one of those countries we were giving any great amounts of aid because they had all that oil; in fact, they had as much probably as Nigeria and I think they were probably as corrupt as Nigeria.

There was a contrast for me in what I was seeing in the country. There was this sort of Corniche or island out there where they were building restaurants and big hotels; maybe it was like Hilton Head. All that was going on and as I say they had the oil executives who were building these mansions in one part of the place so there was a very big gap between the rich and the poor in the country. In Mozambique you didn't have that kind of gap it was more...

Q: They didn't have oil did they or did they?

ANYASO: They didn't have oil so you didn't have that gap. Our PAO, Harriet Maguire, at the time and our ambassador were working very hard on various programs in the country but as I said we did a lot of English teaching so that is what she was concentrating on there. Our ambassador at the time loved opera so during my visit there was a program at his residence; there was an American working for UNICEF or one of the UN organizations whose name was Michael Jackson and I told him afterwards that I didn't think that was an appropriate name for an opera singer. Come up with an Italian name or something but not Michael Jackson. But there was a lady from Mozambique who had been trained in Europe and she sang beautifully so they did a program at the ambassador's residence and that was quite nice.



There is a magnificent hotel in Mozambique called the Polana, it's one of those grand old hotels right on the Indian Ocean and there were a lot of conferences at that particular hotel. But it is a very poor country. They have wonderful handicrafts and they grow cashews in the country and they were making peli-peli I think very well, their industry was doing well I think until the World Bank came in with a plan to send their cashews to India and it became a big brouhaha because it was taking away what they felt was a big industry in Mozambique; I think they finally won and kept their cashews and processed them at home. But just looking at the people and the country they have a long way to go. Economically we had come up with this HYPIC program, which was a technical assistance program for the poorest of the poor countries and they definitely qualified for that. So they were working their way through that system to get some more aid into the country and I think they are doing quite well.

Q: Where back in Washington were you...you were in Washington from when to when?

ANYASO: Okay I got back in '97, '98, '99 for two years '97-'99.

Q: Well this was during the period that USIA was being absorbed wasn't it?

ANYASO: Oh yes.

Q: How did you react to that? What was your impression of it?

ANYASO: Well you know I just came from the job search program and we did a lot of Meyers-Briggs self-awareness things there and I have always known that I am an introvert, etc., etc. So my reaction was to get as far away from it as possible. I wasn't happy about it, the old timers or the veteran USIA people were a part of the task force trying to negotiate a good agreement to integrate us into the State Department and the State Department had committed itself to using the best practices whether they were from State or USIA. None of that seemed to me to be workable having been in the State Department culture before going over to USIA, I didn't think it was going to work. I didn't want to be involved in the move so I talked to personnel about a detail out of the State Department/USIA to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

Q: ICAF.



ANYASO: ICAF and it was the best move I ever made. Not only did I miss the challenges and the disruption of the move and the merger with the State Department but I had an absolutely wonderful year of studying, of travel because they had professional travel for the students; I got to go to Mexico which is not in my area of expertise since I was an Africanist. You would have to pick a field of study some industry that you were going to focus on so even though I had been in USIA all those years and I had dealt with media and had set up media training overseas I really hadn't been that close to the American media so I chose media as my industry. So we got to visit USA Today, we went to New York to ABC News and at the time Peter Jennings was still living and we saw him actually getting ready for and delivering the news; what a nice guy. He had us come down afterwards and he talked to us and that kind of thing. There was a very interesting magazine that was being published at the time called Brills Content, or something like that, which did a critical analysis of the media so we went to visit them and we went to the Wall Street Journal so I had an absolutely wonderful time.

I also took a special concentration in information; I learned about how the military handles information and how they related to us and USIA and that kind of thing. Then we were supposed to have an overseas trip but I opted not to take that, I was a Foreign Service officer and I felt I had been traveling a lot overseas. What I had missed was the opportunity to travel in the United States so I went with some classmates from this information concentration to Hawaii, to Florida, and Colorado. What we were looking at actually because this is a military school we were visiting the particular military institutions in those places. In Florida we went to CENTCOM, in Colorado I think we visited a military installation...

Q: It's also NORAD and all...

ANYASO: NORAD is there and they had an observatory there.

Q: CINCPAC.

ANYASO: CINCPAC, they called them CINCS in those days this was before \_\_\_\_\_.

Q: Commanders and chiefs before...



ANYASO: Donald Rumsfeld said there is only one commander and chief and that is the president of the United States so now they are just commanders of these military commands; so that was very good. At the end of this year...oh let me mention that I had met at this time there a Nigerian, we had international fellows who also studied that year at ICAF from all over the world, but the one who was the leader of the fellows was a Nigerian whom I met; a very great guy, Matthew Agwai. He had been the military attaché ½ I think in Washington, he had been in New York at the consulate there so he was a pretty cosmopolitan guy and has gone on to do wonderful things; I've sort of kept up with him.

Anyway there was that, a great year and they even give you a masters degree in national resources, national security resources because they are accredited by the mid-Atlantic accrediting association. I said, "Oh, I've learned a lot this year and I think the most important thing for us to learn was how the military operates, something about military culture and acronyms. They would have these assemblies in the auditorium and they would bring those commanders from the commands, those CINCdoms to talk to the students. So we got to meet the Marine commander, the Army and that was also very interesting. Then they had the deputy U.S. representative at USUN come down and speak and since that was a State Department person they allowed me to introduce her and that was all very good.

But after a year of this wonderful experience I said what can I do with it now that I've got it? So I decided that I would continue that for a little longer so I applied for a detail, there is a State Department-DOD exchange program. Officers from the military come and serve in the State Department and Foreign Service officers go over to the Pentagon and work; so I did that for two years. I was detailed to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and I was their political-military planner for East Africa and being an honest person I told them I said, "Yes, I have a masters degree in African studies and that I've lived and worked in Africa but it wasn't East Africa." They said, "It doesn't matter its Africa and we need you." So that's the way the military does things so I read all the files. A lot intelligence reports come through there every morning so it didn't take me very long to figure out what was going on in East Africa.

Q: You mentioned acronyms in the military. I've interviewed someone, I'm a little vague on who it was but anyway, they were in Sierra Leone when they had to evacuate and the situation went on for some time and they finally were able to get a military man to come there and help because they were getting all these cables which were absolutely incomprehensible. So they needed a military person to translate them to find out what this meant, whether they should do something. We are talking about evacuating now posts both in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

ANYASO: Those are very complicated because it requires a task force both in the Pentagon and also in the State Department and they are called NEOs I believe (non-military evacuation operations) where they go in and take out the embassy staffs.



Q: Okay what was happening in East Africa particularly that got your attention?

ANYASO: Believe it or not it was Somalia. I spent a lot of time on Somalia and worked very closely with the State Department East Africa office because they were concerned that the military was looking too closely at Somalia and wanted to go in and do something; have some kind of kinetic operation. So I was on the military side writing reports, in meetings, talking about the situation and actually facilitating meetings bringing in academics to talk about Somalia. The feeling at that point was we (the State Department) didn't want the military to really go in to Somalia.

Q: It's one of those things where in a completely disorganized thing you can't do anything you just get involved in the turmoil.

ANYASO: Exactly.

Q: Yes.

ANYASO: It was just a no win situation. The two countries they were looking at, of course, one was Iraq and one was Somalia and we kept saying well don't look at Somalia, don't do that; so that took up a lot of time. As usual, the Somalis were having a big national conference trying to get government in place and it just never seemed to work but there was that.

Q: You did this how long?

ANYASO: General Meyer's was the vice chairman and I did get to travel with him to the area to Kenya, to Ethiopia and...

Q: Eritrea.

ANYASO: Eritrea, oh yes, you couldn't just fly across the border you had to go around.

Q: And Djibouti I suppose.

ANYASO: Went to Djibouti and since he had more than East Africa went over into oh where did we go? We went to I think it was the Emirates and Bahrain.



Q: Yes.

ANYASO: Yeah. How long did I do that? Two years.

Q: You did it from when to when?

ANYASO: I did it from 2000 to 2002 so I was in the Pentagon when the terrorists attacked. We were in a skiff; I guess is what you would call it it was a classified area over there. You didn't have to lock your papers and things up because the whole thing was like a safe. There were six of us in this very small I guess it was about the size of this room, this is a big room, and of course we had a TV monitor in there so we could keep up with what was going on; no sound but just the pictures. So the Navy guy looked up and saw that something was going on in New York and there were planes going into the Trade Center and it looked like people jumping out of windows; we said no, this could not be happening. Somebody opened the door and was coming in and we heard a siren going off, blue lights were flashing and they've all been trained to evacuate when these things happen. So we evacuated the building, we had not felt a thing but when we got out of our office we could smell smoke. Since it was the Joint Chiefs of Staff that part is on the VIP part of the building, the river side part of the building. The plane had attacked the Pentagon on the other side where the Navy was and the Marines had their offices. Then we could see smoke and we evacuated across the street and we could see smoke, we eventually came back to the parking lot and more smoke; we could even smell the fuel from the plane. People were calm, people said on the Hill later on that they could hear the explosion; we heard nothing and we felt nothing, we were right there.

So how to get home they were stopping the metro, I lived in Washington. Most of the people who work there live in Virginia so they were going to Virginia. I caught a ride with a defense contractor who was going into the District. He dropped me off on the green line over near Howard University those trains were still working so I could take the green line to the red line and go home. I came out in Silver Spring, our colleagues who worked for NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency, they were all stranded because they took the commuter train, the MARC train to Maryland and they had stopped all trains. So there were all these people milling around; nobody knew what was happening. I walked from the station to my home in Shepard Park in Washington; I was just glad to be home, glad to be alive. I had my key, I opened the door and went in and there was my husband and he was crying. I said, "What's wrong?" He said, "There had been all these attacks, you were in the Pentagon, we hadn't heard (because we couldn't call) from you I have four children, they had all been calling their father to find out about mom." It was a devastating kind of feeling so, of course, I went to the TV and turned it on so I could watch the coverage; to this day I remember being very, very angry because al Qaeda had been showing these al Jazeera films of what's his name?



Q: Osama bin Laden.

ANYASO: Osama bin Laden was sending this message and I thought how could we have that on American TV after what's happened; don't they realize that they are just giving him a platform to get his message out. I think it was CNN who had connected with them somehow and they were running this but to this day I am very angry about that.

Q: All right things started to pick up about going into Iraq. Were you getting any feeling from your place in the Pentagon about why Iraq? I mean Iraq it didn't seem to have a connection to the...well it didn't have a connection.

ANYASO: Well you know the military is always twenty years ahead of everybody in their planning so CENTCOM was working on these ops plans, operational plans, for everywhere in the world and they had one for Iraq. I believe that the secretary at the time, Secretary Rumsfeld was very interested in Iraq and talking to CENTCOM and talking to the joint chiefs about Iraq and the planning went on. Right after the attacks on the Pentagon, in Pennsylvania and in New York the Pentagon decided they should do something and, of course, there was that strike they made in Afghanistan; so we knew about the planning for that. John Abizaid was, as a matter of fact, in charge of our section and at the time he was a big player in that; he went all the way up to higher office but it was his suggestion that if we are going in that they also drop a lot of food packages and other things so that it just wasn't a military strike. They dropped leaflets, of course, to warn people to tell people but they also dropped food packages and other things for people when they did that.

It may have seemed unconnected to most people but the military had never forgotten the first Gulf War; they have that kind of institutional memory and it had never been completed.

Q: Yes.

ANYASO: So I think that was a part of their institutional culture. The other thing as far as the Air Force was concerned was that from the time of that Gulf War which was in the '90s, '91 or whatever until 2001 or '02 they had these fly-overs, that had been going on for ten or fifteen years. They were wearing out their fleet with all that flying, it was draining and they were not happy about that and they weren't happy about Saddam Hussein, they were not happy about him. In fact, I believe there were posters of him like a bulls eye poster so as far as the Pentagon was concerned there was a connection and when this terrorism attack happened they felt there was a connection.



Q: Did Somalia which was in a state of chaos and al Qaeda was messing around there a little bit did you find they were taking a harder look at Somalia?

ANYASO: Yes, they were taking a harder look at Somalia because there were camps in the southern part of the country of Somalia where people were being trained in terrorism. So they were taking a big, big look and they also felt that if they were successful in attacking Afghanistan and getting the terrorist al Qaeda out where would they go? They felt that they would probably come to Somalia so one of the things I was helping with was a MIO, not a NEO but a MIO, which was a military interdiction zone. Instead of going into the country and doing anything which of course, the State Department was not happy about and would not want them to do, you set up a corridor and you stop people from getting in with ships. So that is what I started the initial work on that and it went up in terms of the Pentagon. In fact, they did actually employ that to keep terrorists from going into Somalia.

Q: During the time you were there I mean Africa, of course, back in the '90s the attack on our embassies in Kenya and Dar es Salaam was this looking at terrorist activities this must have been a big part of your job wasn't it?

ANYASO: Well I was spending a lot of my time on Somalia. The other big issue I was working with the peace-keeping office on this was Ethiopia and Eritrea because they had had their war and there was a military operation that was set up under the UN auspices, peace-keeping mission there to keep the sides apart. But they were trying to demarcate the area. So we spent a lot of time on getting them together on that; these were people who could not...although to look at them to listen to them they were the same people but they would not speak face to face so there were a lot of meetings. One group of people would be upstairs the other group of people would be downstairs so we were trying to resolve this particular issue, this border conflict.

Q: Border conflicts, one of these stupid things was killing a lot of people.

ANYASO: One town on the border had caused all of this and we wanted the Ethiopians to go back to where they wanted to go to their country. There was an aviator I think it was an Ethiopian plane that had been shot down and they wanted to get his body back so that took up a lot of time. As far as the embassy bombings were concerned they were aware of them and certainly the Cole bombing...

Q: The destroyer that...

ANYASO: The destroyer...they were just beginning to connect the dots on all of that.



Q: CINCPAC?

ANYASO: Yes.

Q: Well then after this time with the Joint Chiefs at the Pentagon where did you go?

ANYASO: Now what did I tell you I get to choose my assignment and then my husband gets to choose his and so a funny thing happened to me. I was sitting in a meeting at the National Security Council; I was still working for the Pentagon and I happened to sit next to my colleague from the State Department who was working on public diplomacy. He said to me, "How would you like to go back to Nigeria?" This was Nick Robertson and I said, "Nick, I think I've done my bit for Nigeria. I don't see how it could help my career to go back there a third time." He said, "Why don't you think about it." So I mentioned it to my husband and he said, "Yes, that sounds like a great idea." I said, "I don't see how this is going to help my career." He said, "Why don't you give it a try, it's going back to Abuja, you'll see those things you helped to get started and blah, blah, blah." Well, I ended up going back to Nigeria this time as the country PAO which was the highest ranking PD position; I was in charge of Abuja and Lagos, our branch in Lagos and I was the spokesperson for the embassy. Actually it did help my career. I think I was promoted to OC out of that job and a little later on to MC but it definitely didn't hurt which was my concern at the time.

But I've always enjoyed Nigeria I just sort of threw myself into it, had a much bigger staff, we had more space. The building I had acquired during my previous tour there was being utilized. We had a great information officer, Peggy McKean. She was a part of a tandem her husband was the military attaché<sup>1/2</sup> and she was our information officer; actually she wasn't a PDA officer. She was a political officer but because of his assignment she applied for the information job there. I had a wonderful indefatigable woman who was the CAO...

Q: Cultural affairs officer.



ANYASO: Cultural affairs officer Dehab Gabreab who is an Eritrean by birth and we were busy, busy, busy. Of course, I had a magnificent and well trained Nigerian staff, Hausa speaking; Sani Mohammed was our senior information specialist. Sani was working on a Hausa language magazine, which we were going to be using for our Muslim outreach. After 9/11 everybody no matter what cone you were in was working on Muslim outreach. Counter terrorism some people called it we called it Muslim outreach. So we worked pretty hard to try to make sure that at least half of our exchangees were Muslims. We had our magazine Magama, which not only had articles about the United States and things like that; I remember one cover, it's a beautiful magazine, we talked about the Iraq war and we had these women in these black chadors on there crying and that kind of thing. We didn't shy away from what was going on but it was a classy magazine and, in fact, it was the only Hausa language magazine in the country in the north and they began using it in the universities, in their classes, because it was so good. Therefore our message was amplified.

Q: Were we feeling that the Muslims in Nigeria were identifying with the forces that we were opposed to al Qaeda and others in Iraq and all?

ANYASO: Because of the religion and they felt a fellowship with their Muslim brothers there was always the possibility that they could be recruited especially the young men by al Qaeda. There was some activity, not a lot, but there was some activity, which indicated that some people were involved. I believe in one of the arrests I think it was in Islamabad they picked up some al Qaeda people and one was a Nigerian so there was always that possibility and so we were very careful. We also closed our consulate in Lagos at one point because of a threat situation so yes, there was that. There was a lot of disinformation out there; there would be stories about Abu Ghraib...

Q: This is the scandal about how the Iraqi prisoners were mistreated by our military prison keepers.



ANYASO: Exactly. There was Abu Ghraib, there was the Danish cartoons which a lot of Muslims did not like; they thought it offended Mohammad. Whenever there was anything like that the temperature in Northern Nigeria would just go up so we would have to work very hard making demarches explaining, especially for us in the PD part of the embassy. I would go over and talk to the editor of the newspaper, the Daily Trust newspaper, which was, I think it was funded by the Iranians or Saudis but anyway I would go over with my talking points and explain to them how we saw the situation. Then there was a rumor that in Iraq some of our military people had flushed the Koran down the toilet; that's always a good one. So you go over and lay out the facts as you see them and I think we had a good relationship with them but I couldn't say that they were good supporters of the United States but at least they listened. You could calm things down and actually they would publish some of the materials that I would give them. For example on the Koran story I had some materials that had been prepared in Washington that they had sent out to all the posts and they published it on the front page. So I couldn't have asked for more.

Q: You've been away for a while what was the situation sort of political in Nigeria at this point? You were there from when to when?

ANYASO: All right this time I was there from 2002 to 2006, my usual four years. But this time there was a reason to extend for a fourth year and that was because we finished the new embassy and I had been in all kinds of situations in Nigeria and Lagos, Abuja starting up we call those the grungy little villas that we were working out of. You could smell the mildew and here we had thanks to General Williams who was in the office of overseas buildings who built these embassies. We had a brand new embassy in Nigeria and I couldn't see leaving the country without at least serving in that new edifice so I extended for a year so that I could serve in the new embassy and it was great. Absolutely wonderful but it was a fortress and its problems of access for our particular audience.

Q: What was the government like at that time?

ANYASO: Whenever you go to Nigeria it's never simple. The last military dictator was Babangida, no Abacha was after Babangida but the fact that Babangida had annulled an election one of the freest and fairest in Nigeria's history on June 12th he had annulled it, thrown it out, the western part of the country where the Yoruba are politically strong are still upset. They were upset from Babangida through Abacha they were still upset. So at this point Obasanjo had been elected who had been imprisoned under Sani Abacha and I believe Tom Pickering who was an Undersecretary of State and Susan Rice who was the Assistant Secretary for Africa had been in Nigeria when Abiola died. Now Abiola was a candidate who had won this free and fair election; it had been annulled and he was thrown in prison. He was a Yoruba. So we had these American officials visiting him to make sure he was okay and he died.



Q: I have Tom talking about that. He said it was a rather tricky situation.

ANYASO: Unbelievable that here they were. The steward had gone out for tea, brought tea, drank tea and the man just falls out, he just collapses. Anyway, so this is the background to my return to Nigeria and Obasanjo has now been out of prison. In my previous incarnation, I had done a press conference for former President Carter who liked Obasanjo who was in prison at the time and pleaded with Sani Abacha to release him. So I believe at least Abacha went half way; he didn't release him entirely but he put him under house arrest.

Anyway, this is a man with an interesting political history so now he is out and he's won this election. People are happy, hopeful that things will get better and being Nigeria things just seemed to get more complicated. He's a folksy kind of guy, liked to be looked upon, as a father figure, papa, and he would have these weekly radio interviews and maybe even a talk show from time to time and talk to the public. Now he didn't like the media, he didn't like them questioning what he was doing but he would do this anyway because somebody told him it was a good idea. He allowed, well they allowed him more political space. At this point there was a legislature again after Abacha had cancelled it, abolished it, now there was a new national assembly that had been elected. He wanted to control it but they had a speaker and they were functioning. He had a vice president, it's interesting he is a military man he's not a democrat so he still wanted to dictate things and do things his way. He did not get along with his vice president and at one point when that vice president was running although it is a long story but anyway he seemed to try but there were things that were not good. For example, in terms of the budget, universities were used to getting quarterly stipends from the government to keep them running; he put them on a month to month basis and they were always late in getting paid so the universities had to go out to the commercial banks, borrow money to keep going; it was just horrendous.

Abacha had reformed the banks and set up an economic dream team. They called it the dream team; Nigerians love the US and they love all of our popular culture so they knew about the Los Angeles Lakers and Magic Johnson and all those people out there on the Lakers who had a dream.

Q: These are basketball teams.



ANYASO: That's right and so dream team is what they call their economic reform team. They had a woman who was the Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala; they had the administrator for Abuja who was on that team and they all seemed to be doing the right thing, more transparency and things like that. HIV aids was getting attention under him; he was one of the first people to go out and get his blood tested to see if he had the virus. It was on TV and we were working through AID on this whole problem and that was a success. The polio situation when I first returned to the country the Rotarians, the International Rotary Club was trying to stamp out polio in the world; global campaign I think they called it polio plus and they were down to just a few cases in Pakistan and a few cases in Nigeria. So Kano was the epicenter for the program, there was this one village outside...

Q: Up in Hausa country.

ANYASO: Up in Hausa country very conservative Hausa country and there was this village outside the city of Kano, which is where they have this wild poliovirus. Obasanjo had appointed a woman to be in charge of this polio situation in health; she was not an expert she was a friend of his wife, this was still going on. This is conservative Hausa Fulani country and Islamic and this woman was Christian; she would go around with this cross on, this very large cross, and would make the people she was trying to work with very upset so we were having a few set backs in terms of this polio campaign. The World Health Organization was involved, we were involved, the Japanese were involved, and lots of donors were involved in trying to stamp it out.

Lo and behold it becomes political. The minister of health in Kano, the state minister of health decides that there is a conspiracy that this vaccine has something in it which is going to sterilize Muslims and he didn't trust any of us. So the U.S. AID director and I were on this team we were trying to figure out how do we handle this; if it is a Muslim thing we have to get the Sultan of Sokoto involved and we did, he came out and he supported the vaccinations. They still didn't listen, the Nigerian government sent a team of people to Indonesia to test the vaccine and come back with a report. But anyway this whole thing had just sort of gone off the tracks. The upshot was that there were more infections now occurring in Nigeria, which lead to more infectious in eight other African countries; so instead of finally putting an end to this awful disease because of Nigeria it spread again and it's still going on. I think he was trying to do the right thing on that.



Now there is a difficulty as we stand for rule of law, we support constitutional arrangements; Obasanjo decided he wanted to have a third term. Now I won't mention Michael Bloomberg having a third term but at this point a third term was not something that the U.S. government wanted to support so our State Department was very firm that we would fight all efforts of Obasanjo to have a third term. He was bribing people in the legislature to vote for changing the constitution so that he could have a third term. Luckily once it was exposed they did not support it so he was not very happy with the United States over this. He had set up a fraud committee, which at first had done great things, but now it was being used politically against his enemies so it was a very interesting time again in Nigeria.

Q: Well you were there until 2006 and then what happened?

ANYASO: In 2006 I bid on a job back in the State Department in the Africa bureau to be the office director for public affairs and public diplomacy and I got it. That is like the pinnacle for a PD officer that is the job to have. So I got it and I enjoyed it for three years. I wish I had known about the Washington tradecraft course at FSI, which I did not take so I spent some time trying to learn Washington again.

Q: How agencies work and how does one operate within the system.

ANYASO: How the State Department worked, exactly. I muddled through, I figured it out and we managed a \$22 million budget for our African PD offices overseas. We also have an office in Paris for Francophone Africa, which has been broadened to all of Africa; it does the package programming, book translations and things like that. So over all I had a \$22 million budget, 150 people and I had people scattered all over Sub-Saharan Africa and 20 people in Paris. It was challenging because interestingly enough in this regard you have like three masters not just one, not just two but in this position you have three masters. You are working with ECA, they have an assistant secretary and they fund the educational and cultural programs; you have IIP which does the speaker programs and the information program that runs the American.gov the website so we had to be working with them especially the speakers and the IV program to make sure that they understood what the Africa policy was all about and to try and get more resources for Africa. All right, you've got that and then you have the assistant secretary for Africa that's where we got the policy.

Q: That was Jen...



ANYASO: Actually that was Jendayi, Jendayi Frazer former ambassador to South Africa and who had come in from academia. She had been a university professor, I think it was the University of Denver and since she has left the Department she is at Carnegie Mellon. We would go into staff meeting, off sites, trying to support the policies and we also were in charge of the outreach program meaning that we, ourselves from my office, but we also asked other office directors and principals, Jendayi and her deputies to go out and talk about Africa policy to the U.S. community whether it was the think tanks, the African studies association, the universities, whatever, we wanted our people out there to get a better understanding of U.S. Africa policy; so there is that. We were also in charge of our press relations with the public affairs bureau getting guidance. At least every day there are one or two stories coming out of Africa that we have to give guidance on; what are we going to tell the press at the noon briefing.

Then this interesting situation as you can see what used to be USIA is now splintered: ICA is one bureau, IIP is one bureau and you also have an undersecretary for public diplomacy and public affairs. When I started it was Karen Hughes so of course her agenda, her priorities are important, what target groups should we be looking at. She also had us involved in pilot programs reaching out to the Muslim world. After Karen it was Jim Glassman whose approach was a War of Ideas; it was very much like a Cold War kind of strategy; instead of the Russians it was the Muslims. When I left it was Judith McHale who had come in from the private sector; she had been a vice president at Discovery Communications. So there is all this that you have to sort out. It is like juggling balls everyday.

Q: Okay you are a professional public diplomacy officer and you've been around the block many times in Africa. One gets the feeling and I'm speaking more or less from the press and all you had a couple things going. One you had a president who really George Bush II who was really interested in Africa but a president who was being confrontational to practically the whole rest of the world and was not a popular figure with many people about getting involved in Iraq which for many people, myself included, seemed to be superfluous. I mean it just was the wrong target. Anyway, you have that and then you have this public diplomacy which seems to be going after people who are good at selling \_\_\_\_\_ I mean all sorts of ideas that didn't seem to really be connected to what we would consider the real world of people; I'm not trying to put words in your mouths but I would like your reaction to this.



ANYASO: Well, those of us who had been around the block who had been to this rodeo more than one time our objective continued to be creating mutual understanding, our objective and our tools tended to be people to people programs; that's how we saw it when we came in and we continued to see it that way. Charlotte Beers who came from Madison Avenue wanted to use some of the public relations techniques in public diplomacy making it more effective. So she came up with shared values and that was her program, which brought a magazine, HI magazine, which did not succeed for a number of reasons and it was like a cookie cutter approach. We have discovered that people in different cultures react differently to certain things and they would send us out these ads, which we were to put into the local papers. Now if we saw an ad that we felt would not work in our milieu we just couldn't use; but that was the kind of thing that was going on. She felt that we were working with women's groups and things like that which we were a great deal especially Muslim women's federations. So we had sewing machines that we were giving out to people and things like that; not bad, people needed things like that. The economy wasn't good, people needed a way to make money they needed a livelihood and these machines would help them so it wasn't bad at all.

Karen Hughes felt that we should have diplomacy of deeds that it wasn't enough to use words but we had to show people that we respected them and we were doing good thing so that was the emphasis she placed on it. She was very effective I think in doing that.

George Bush as president we were very pleased with what he did in terms of his deeds he came up with that President's Emergency Relief Plan for HIV aids; PEPFAR a \$15 billion, massive resources to attack this problem. Now when I was at ICAF among my military colleagues we were looking ahead twenty years and running these scenarios and when it came to Africa and aids write them off nothing can be done not so. President Bush decided that we were going to do something, \$15 billion over a five-year period to attack this and people did it seriously setting up clinics to test and diagnostic things. It was good, mother to child transmission they came up with a way to prevent the children from getting this virus, it was working and we were saving these kids from this dread disease. In fact, President Bush came to Nigeria, I think it was 2004, and we had a picture of him with these children and mothers with this disease. PEPFAR is the best thing that happened, it's been extended for another five years or ten years or so and given more money \$30 billion. Good. That is the best thing that I think any of our administrations have done.

The second thing that he did and he should be canonized for it is the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

Q: Which is what?



ANYASO: Well actually the people at USAID probably don't like it but it's another way of giving technical assistance. You give large grants for agriculture infrastructure projects. I'm not a development specialist but I have observed and I have had to go out and promote their programs and publicize their programs so I do know a little bit about what AID does. Everybody goes through these trends and back in the sixties they were building roads and schools and hospitals and that went away. They were doing smaller capacity building projects; seed projects, maternal health projects and things like that but they weren't building things. There was nothing concrete. Well the Millennium Challenge Corporation was there to help countries and because I've mentioned corruption I will mention it again. If you show that you are doing something for your country that you are not just taking the money and wasting it we will help you. There are sixteen eligibility criteria; they have to show that they have reached a certain level in education or their health statistics or whatever. Then we will consider you for a Millennium Challenge grant; it is a very laborious time-consuming thing. When I first came back I think it was Ghana got a \$547 million grant to work on infrastructure. Senegal is about to get their money and so I think that's the best thing that we could be doing because I think these countries need infrastructure, they need communications, they need water systems, they need a lot and we had gotten away from that mode. This allowed them to do something that they want; it also allows us to compete with the Chinese who are investing in Africa in a big way in their financial institutions but they are also coming with these infrastructure projects. So we weren't in the game; we are now in the game because of George Bush. So I think that George Bush has done more for Africa than anybody else.

Q: It's a very interesting thing because you get completely different views when you look at Africa very positive, look at Europe very negative.

ANYASO: It shows not only in the fact that those professionals working in Africa can see it as a good thing but the Africans see it as a good thing; they loved President Bush. When they did these opinion polls, The Pew polls and some of the other polls that were done at looking at our relationships with the rest of the world Africa was the only continent where America's favorability ratings were still very, very high and so it makes sense.

Q: Well you retired did you recently?

ANYASO: As of Saturday October 31 I am retired.

Q: So what are you up to now?



ANYASO: Well I'm exploring ways of transferring my skills, my experience in Africa and the Middle East and my public affairs skills into the private sector so I'm just looking for something that I can be interested in; something that's challenging.

Q: Well Claudia this has been fascinating. Thank you.

End of interview